HIDEYUKI KIKUCHI'S
Vampire Hunter D
2
ADAPTED AND ILLUSTRATED BY SAIKO TAKAKI
DMP
DIGITAL MANGA PUBLISHING

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Vampire Hunter D

Volume 2

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SAIKO TAKAKI

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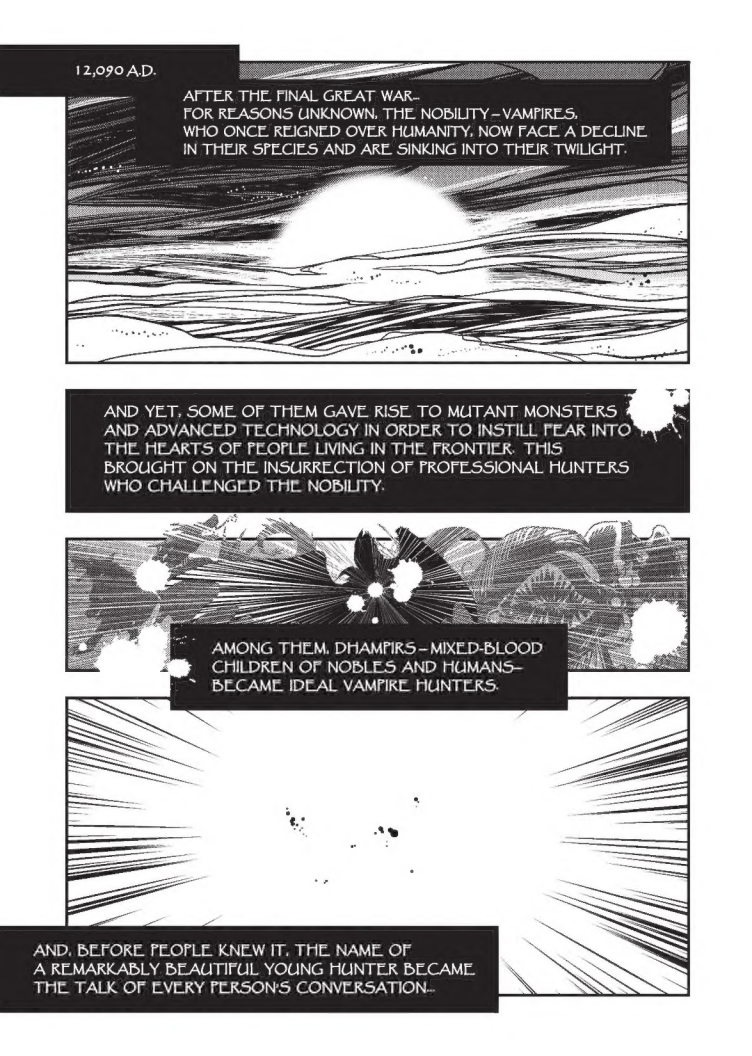
12,090 A.D.
AFTER THE FINAL GREAT WAR--
FOR REASONS UNKNOWN, THE NOBILITY--VAMPIRES, WHO ONCE REIGNED OVER HUMANITY, NOW FACE A DECLINE IN THEIR SPECIES AND ARE SINKING INTO THEIR TWILIGHT.
AND YET, SOME OF THEM GAVE RISE TO MUTANT MONSTERS AND ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY IN ORDER TO INSTILL FEAR INTO THE HEARTS OF PEOPLE LIVING IN THE FRONTIER. THIS BROUGHT ON THE INSURRECTION OF PROFESSIONAL HUNTERS WHO CHALLENGED THE NOBILITY.
AMONG THEM, DHAMPIRS--MIXED-BLOOD CHILDREN OF NOBLES AND HUMANS--BECAME IDEAL VAMPIRE HUNTERS.
AND, BEFORE PEOPLE KNEW IT, THE NAME OF A REMARKABLY BEAUTIFUL YOUNG HUNTER BECAME THE TALK OF EVERY PERSON'S CONVERSATION...

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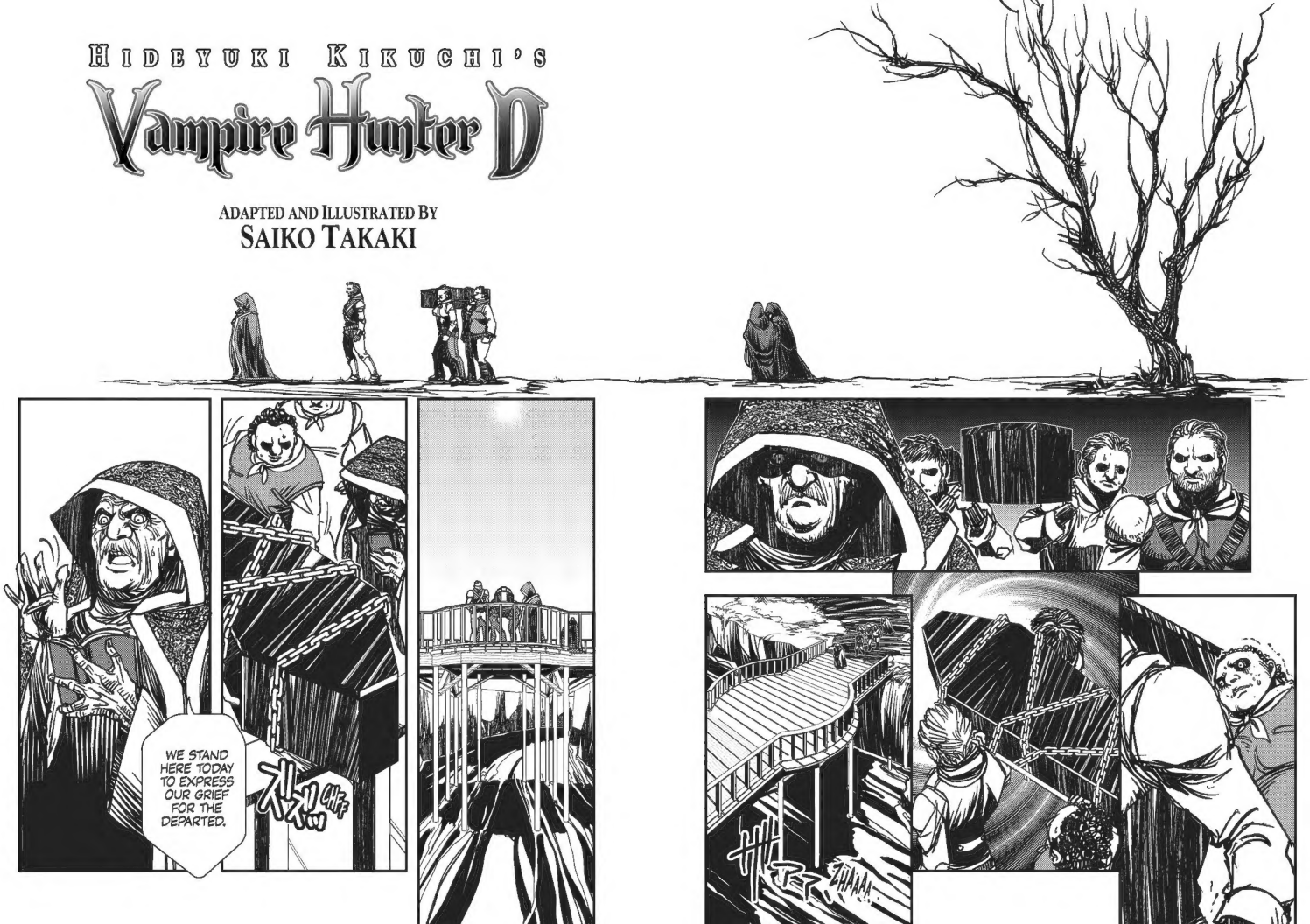

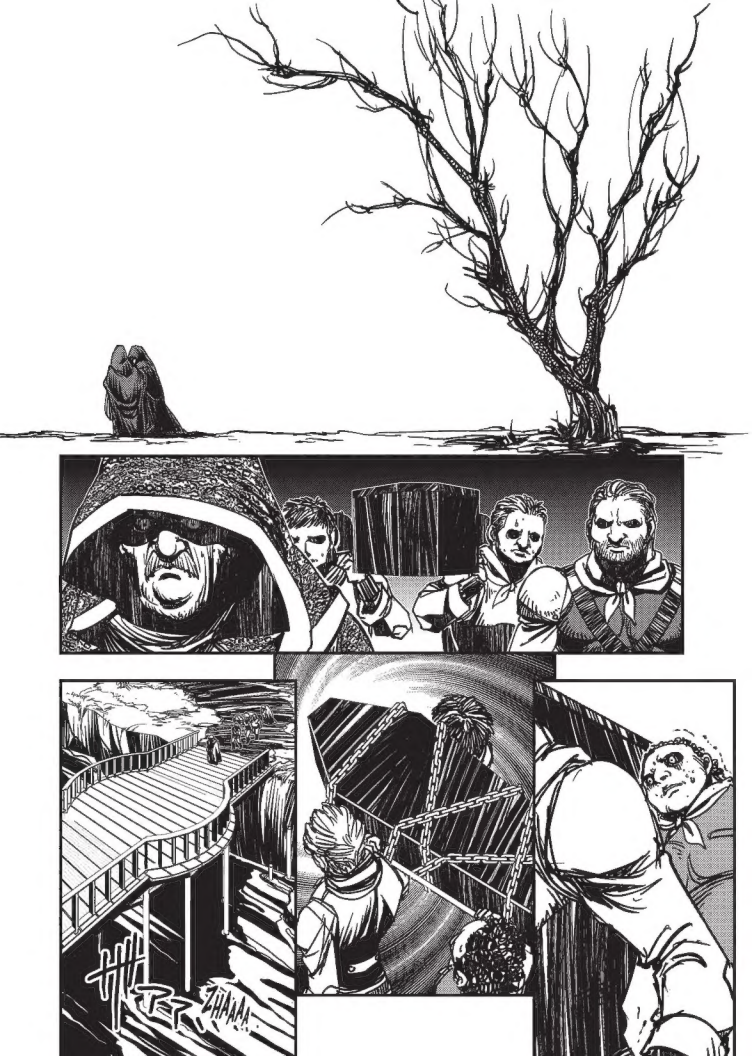
SHHH
SHAAAA!

HIDEYUKI KIKUCHI'S

Vampire Hunter D

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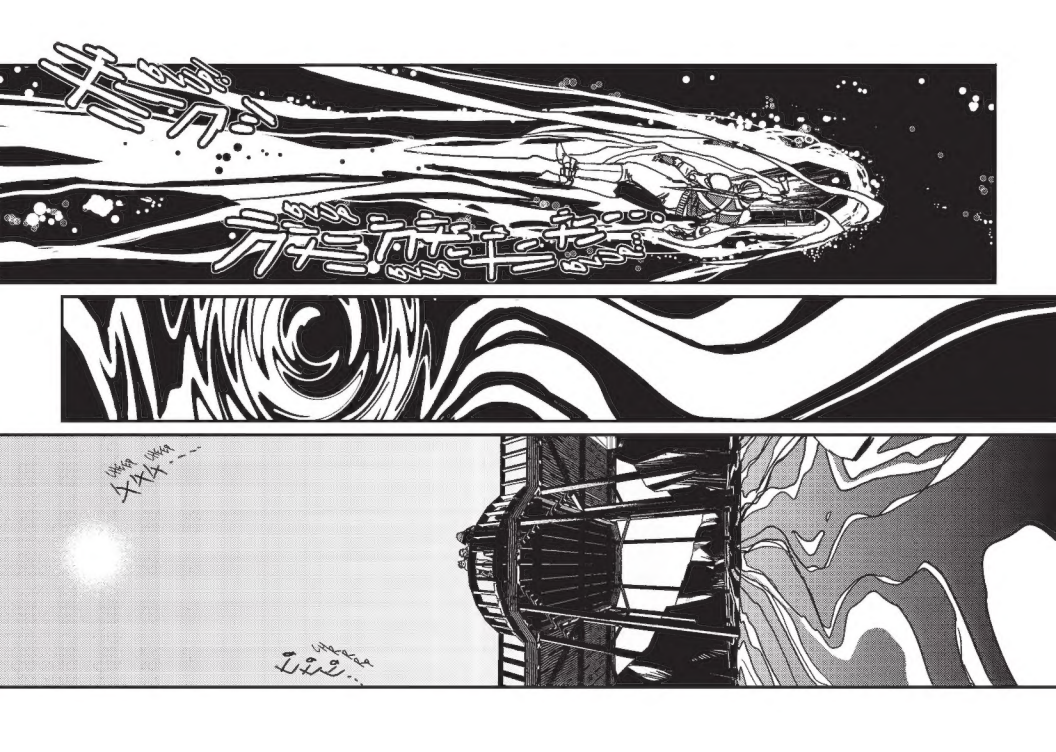
Ah!
SILENCE!
GINA BOLAN, BELOVED DAUGHTER OF SEKA BOLAN AND RESIDENT OF THE VILLAGE OF TEPES, WESTERN FRONTIER SECTOR SEVEN, FELL VICTIM TO THE DESPISED NOBILITY AND MET HER END LAST NIGHT...
TUNK
Hff
Hff
KRAK!

KAING!
DROP THE COFFIN!
KRNCH
GRNCH
HURRY!
IN THE RIVER!
SPLASH



VILLAGE OF TEITES

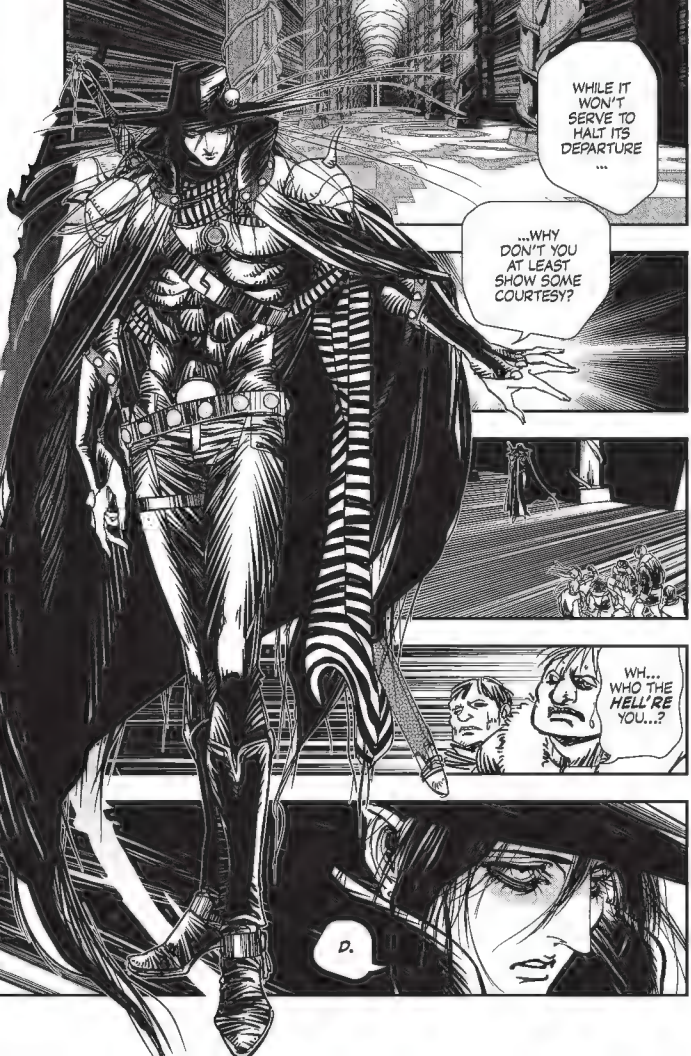
SHIT.
WE'VE BEEN CLIMBIN' LIKE THIS FOR NINE HOURS NOW AND WE AIN'T REACHED THE TOP.
NOW THERE'S ONLY TWO HOURS 'TIL SUNSET ...
CAN WE MAKE IT THERE IN TWO HOURS?
AND IF WE DO, ONCE WE GET THERE... WILL WE HAVE TIME TO FIND AND DESTROY HIM?
WHAT IF...

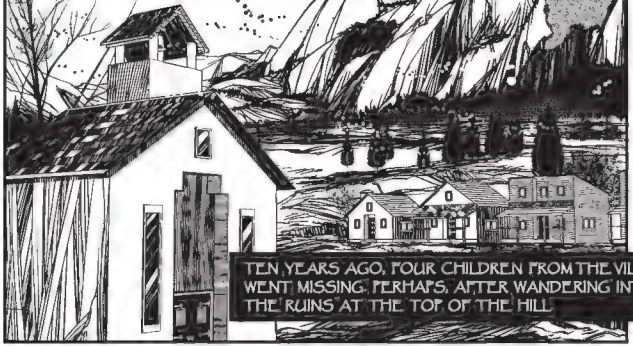
OH YEAH!
AL-RIGHT! WE'RE HERE!
BAM!!
HA! HA! HA!
RM.
RM.
Y'ALL KNOW THE PLAN, RIGHT?
IF THERE'S TROUBLE, YOU WHISTLE.
IF YOU FIND WHERE HE IS, DO IT TWICE.

NEVER MIND THAT, WHY'D YOU COME UP HERE?
I DIDN'T SEE YOU DURING THE CLIMB.
HOW LONG'VE YOU BEEN HERE?
I JUST ARRIVED.
I THINK YOU KNOW ABOUT THE MESS IN THE VILLAGE, BUT AFTER ALL THAT SEARCHIN' AND NO FINDIN', DOESN'T THAT JUST LEAVE THIS PLACE?
...BOMBS WITH YOU, IS THERE?
THERE'S NO REASON TO BRING...
WHAT'RE YOU DOIN' HERE?
WELL, IF IT AIN'T LINA.
NOW HOLD ON!
YOU GUYS OUT FOR BLOOD OR SOME-THING ?!

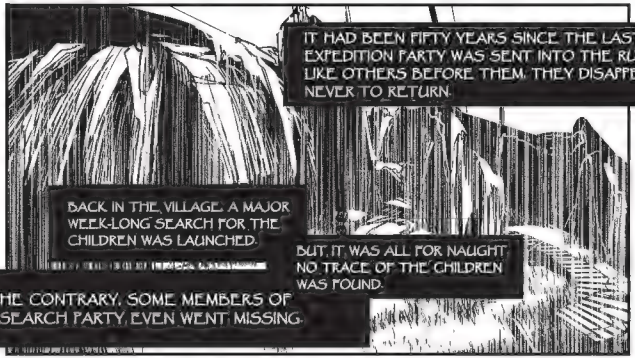
THE HILL'S TRICK DON'T WORK ON YOU... FIGURES.
AHA.
OF COURSE YOU DIDN'T SEE ME.
I CAME UP THE OPPOSITE SIDE.
HOW'RE WE SUPPOSED TO KNOW WHAT POWERS YOU USE BEHIND OUR BACKS?
YOU GUYS'VE BEEN WEIRD EVER SINCE THAT HAPPENED.
NOW IT'S TIME WE FOUND OUT.
STRIP OFF THEM CLOTHES.
QUIT YOUR TOM-FOOLERY.
YOU KNOW WHAT'LL HAPPEN LATER IF YOU DO THAT KIND OF THING...
HEH! THAT SUPPOSED TO BE A THREAT?
EVERYONE IN THE VILLAGE KNOWS WHAT'S GOIN' ON BETWEEN YOU AND THE MAYOR.
IF WE CLEAR AWAY THOSE DOUBTS ABOUT YOU NOW, THE OLD MAN'LL BE IN HOG'S HEAVEN.

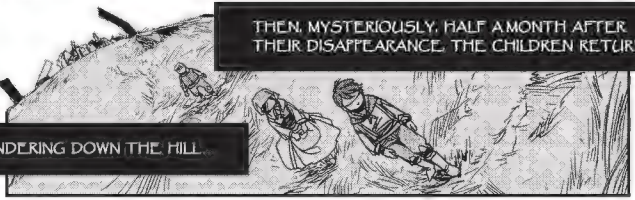
HAA
BITCH!
WHOL
QUIT IT!
GRAB
GULP...
THIS IS A PLACE WHERE A CIVILIZATION PERISHED.
CLACK


WHILE IT WON'T SERVE TO HALT ITS DEPARTURE ...
...WHY DON'T YOU AT LEAST SHOW SOME COURTESY?
WH... WHO THE HELL'RE YOU...?
D.


TEN YEARS AGO, FOUR CHILDREN FROM THE VILLAGE WENT MISSING. PERHAPS, AFTER WANDERING INTO THE RUINS AT THE TOP OF THE HILL.

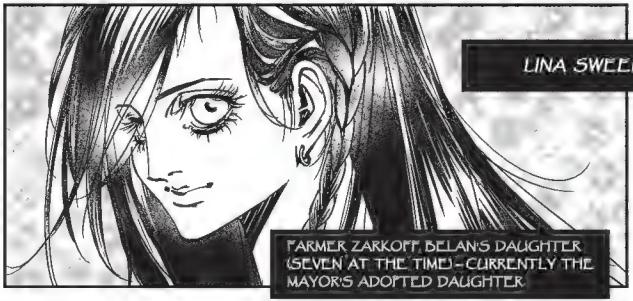
THE RUINS, IT IS SAID, WERE ALREADY OVERGROWN WITH BRUSH BY THE TIME THE VILLAGE FOUNDERS SET FOOT ON THE LAND, 200 YEARS AGO.


IT HAD BEEN FIFTY YEARS SINCE THE LAST EXPEDITION PARTY WAS SENT INTO THE RUINS. LIKE OTHERS BEFORE THEM, THEY DISAPPEARED, NEVER TO RETURN.
BACK IN THE VILLAGE, A MAJOR WEEK-LONG SEARCH FOR THE CHILDREN WAS LAUNCHED.
BUT, IT WAS ALL FOR NAUGHT. NO TRACE OF THE CHILDREN WAS FOUND.
ON THE CONTRARY, SOME MEMBERS OF THE SEARCH PARTY EVEN WENT MISSING.


THEN, MYSTERIOUSLY, HALF A MONTH AFTER THEIR DISAPPEARANCE, THE CHILDREN RETURNED.
WANDERING DOWN THE HILL...

HOWEVER, ONLY THREE OF THE FOUR CAME BACK.

THE CHILDREN HAD NO MEMORY OF THE TIME THEY WERE MISSING.
AS FOR WHO THEY WERE.


LINA SWEEN
FARMER ZARKOFF, BELAN'S DAUGHTER (SEVEN AT THE TIME) – CURRENTLY THE MAYOR'S ADOPTED DAUGHTER

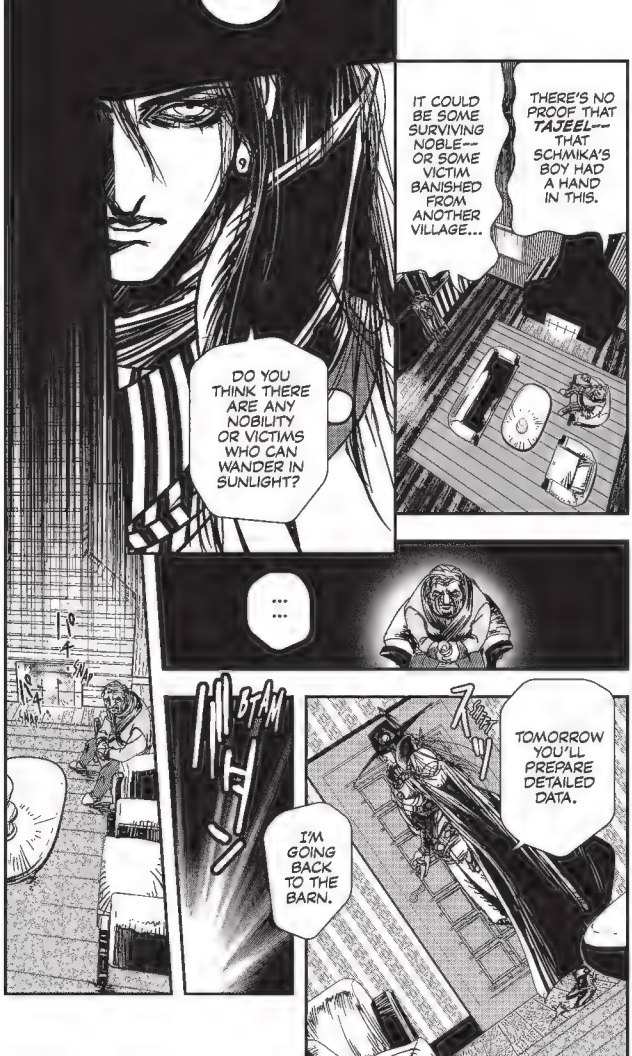
CUORE JORSHTERN
FARMER HANS JORSHTERN'S SON (AGE EIGHT AT THE TIME) – DERANGED SINCE THE TIME OF HIS DISCOVERY

LUCAS MEYER
TEACHER NICHOLAS MEYER'S SON (AGE TEN AT THE TIME) – A SCHOOL TEACHER.

TAJEEL SCHMIKA
GENERAL-STORE PROPRIETOR HARIYAMIDA SCHMIKA'S SON (AGE EIGHT AT THE TIME) – PRESENT WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN.

I'D LIKE TO ASK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED HALF A MONTH AGO.
GESLIN WAS SUPPOSEDLY HIRED BEFORE ME.
HE'S DEAD...
...NUMBER OF VICTIMS, AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE ATTACKS?
FOUR, ALL IN THE VICINITY OF THE VILLAGE.
ALL IN THE EVENING.
CARE FOR A DRINK?
I DON'T DRINK.

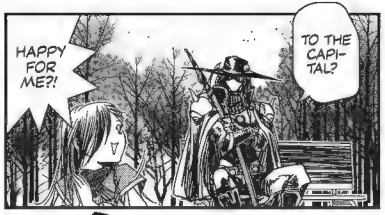
I HEAR THERE WERE STRANGE CIRCUM-STANCES.
SO YOU EVEN KNOW ABOUT THAT.
STAKES DRIVEN IN DURING DAYLIGHT AND BURIED IN THE RIVER...
THE VICTIMS HAVE ALL BEEN DISPOSED OF.
SHIVER
...THE INFERNAL NOBILITY AND THEIR ILK START TO STRUT FREELY UNDER THE MORNING SUN?
WHAT KIND OF A STATE THIS WORLD'LL BE IN IF...
GUONK
SNAP
SNAP
YOU UNDER-STAND WHAT THIS MEANS, DON'T YOU?!
BACK TO LIFE-- SMACK DAB IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CEREMONY!
IT ALL HAPPENED IN THE LIGHT OF DAY.
--THAT'S ALL.
MY JOB'S TO FIND THE MISSING CHILD AND DESTROY HIM.


THERE'S NO PROOF THAT TAJEEL--- THAT SCHMIKA'S BOY HAD A HAND IN THIS.
IT COULD BE SOME SURVIVING NOBLE--- OR SOME VICTIM BANISHED FROM ANOTHER VILLAGE...
DO YOU THINK THERE ARE ANY NOBILITY OR VICTIMS WHO CAN WANDER IN SUNLIGHT?
...
...
TOMORROW YOU'LL PREPARE DETAILED DATA.
I'M GOING BACK TO THE BARN.
BTAM
SHAA

IN WHAT WAY?
HEY, ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
GOING OUTSIDE THIS EARLY IN THE MORNING.
AREN'T DHAMPIRS WEAK IN THE DAYTIME?
THIS DOESN'T SEEM TO BE THE ROUTE WE DISCUSSED.
OH! YOU NOTICED?
THAT'S NO FUN.
BUT IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE RIGHT AS RAIN.
YOU KNOW A LOT OF STRANGE TRIVIA.
BECAUSE YOU HAVE NOBLE BLOOD.

LOOK!
BUS
IT'S THE BUS STOP!
I'M GOING TO THE CAPITAL.
IT'S THE ONLY SPOT FROM WHICH YOU CAN LEAVE TOWN.
THEY DON'T RUN OVER THE WINTER, BUT IN FIVE DAYS AN ELECTRIC BUS'LL COME THROUGH.
I'LL BE ON THE FIRST ONE THAT MORNING!

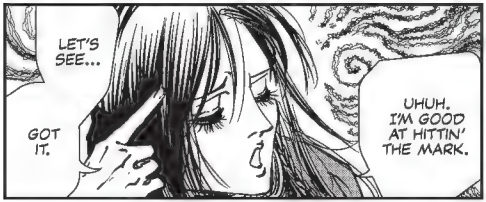
--GET BACK ON. YOU PROMISED TO LEAD ME TO THE VICTIMS' PLACES.
YOU GOT IT.


HAPPY FOR ME?!
TO THE CAPI-TAL?

HEY, WHY DON'T YOU SMILE? DOES IT HURT?
...
...
...YOU'RE ONE STRANGE GIRL.

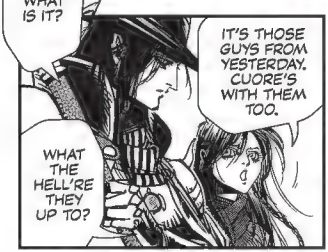
I'LL PREDICT SOMETHING FOR YOU.
PRE-DICT?
NOTHING WIPES THAT SCARY LOOK OFF YOUR FACE, HUH, MR. SERIOUS.

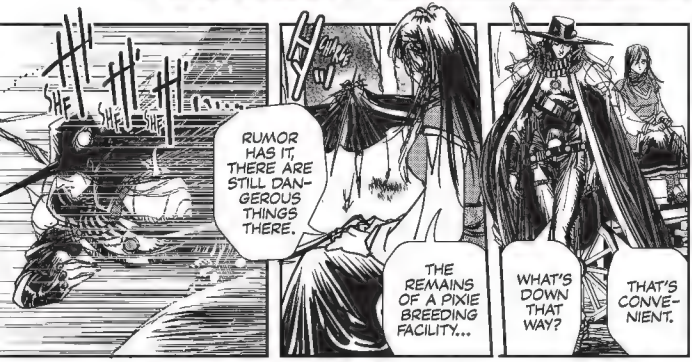
ガラガラガラ...

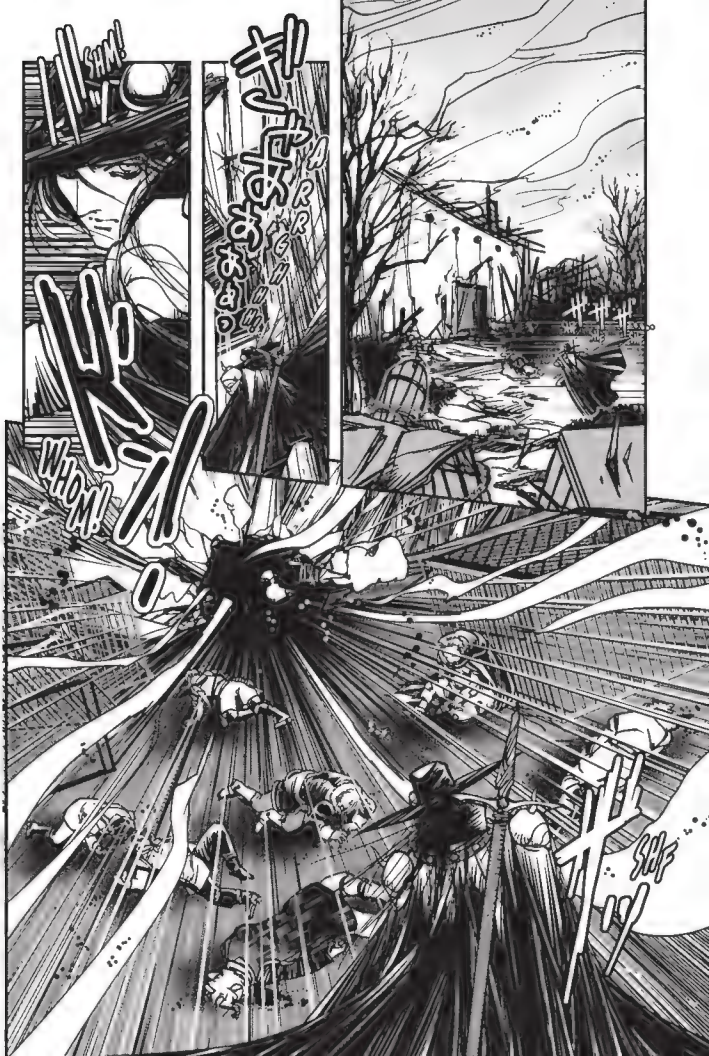

LET'S SEE...
GOT IT.
UHUH. I'M GOOD AT HITTIN' THE MARK.

THOSE SLIME-BALLS!
AH!

YOU,
WILL BE SMILING WHEN YOU LEAVE THIS PLACE, I BET.

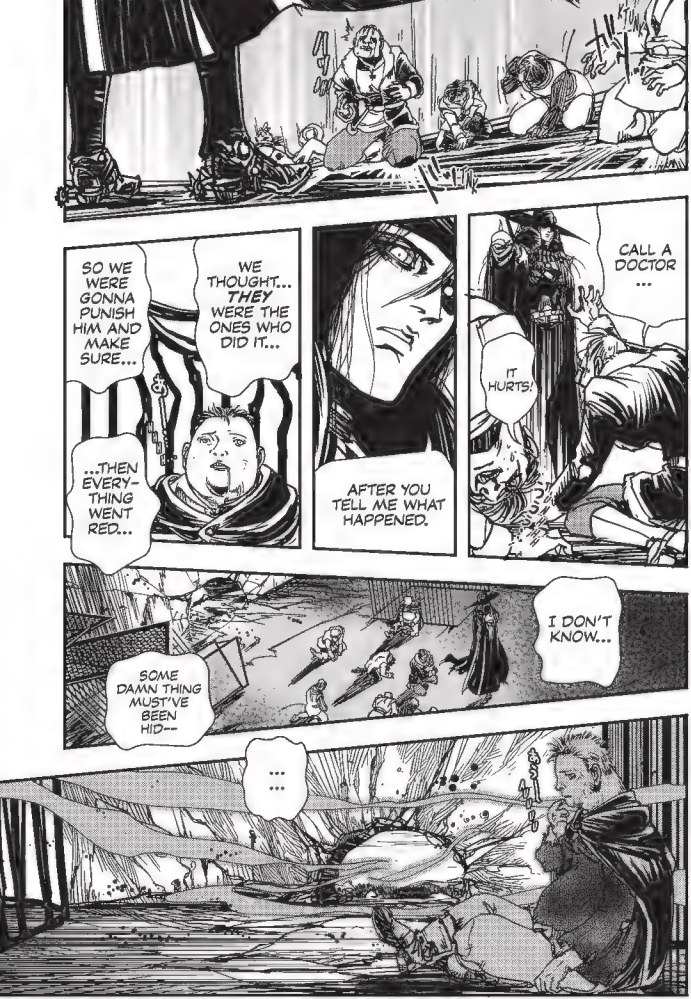

WHAT IS IT?
IT'S THOSE GUYS FROM YESTERDAY. CUORE'S WITH THEM TOO.
WHAT THE HELL'RE THEY UP TO?


SHF SHF SHF
RUMOR HAS IT, THERE ARE STILL DANGEROUS THINGS THERE.
THE REMAINS OF A PIXIE BREEDING FACILITY...
WHAT'S DOWN THAT WAY?
THAT'S CONVENIENT.


SHA!!
WHOM!
SHF

WHAT HAP-PENED?
MY NAME'S D.
...BLOOD.
WHAT?
...THE BLOOD... NOT ME...
WHAT DID YOU SEE?
WHAT DID YOU SEE AT THAT CASTLE?

POS-
SESSED,
EH?
UHNN
SRNG
SHM
SHM
SHM
SHM


KTUNK
CALL A DOCTOR ...
IT HURTS!
AFTER YOU TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED.
WE THOUGHT... THEY WERE THE ONES WHO DID IT...
SO WE WERE GONNA PUNISH HIM AND MAKE SURE...
...THEN EVERY-THING WENT RED...
I DON'T KNOW...
SOME DAMN THING MUST'VE BEEN HID---
... ...

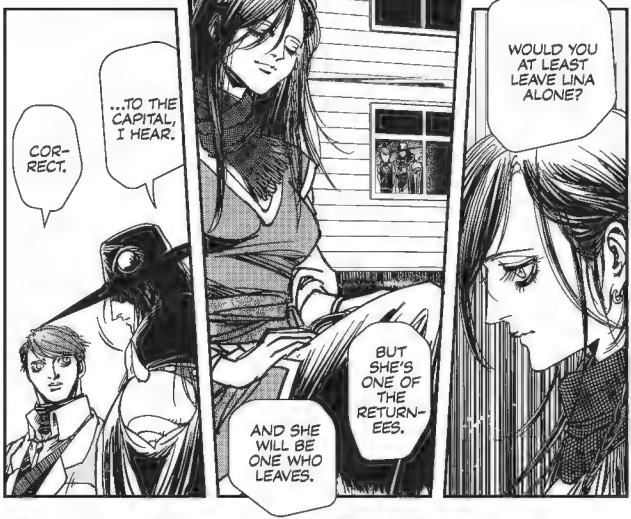
I'D LIKE TO HEAR WHAT HAPPENED TEN YEARS AGO, FROM YOU.
ALL I KNOW IS THE MAYOR'S VERSION.
CHANCES ARE, WHAT YOU HEARD COVERS EVERY-THING.
...UN-FORTU-NATELY.
I'M THE ONE WHO WISHES HE KNEW THE TRUTH.
BUT HONESTLY SPEAKING ...
I SUSPECT YOU'VE HEARD THE ENTIRE SITUATION FROM THE MAYOR...

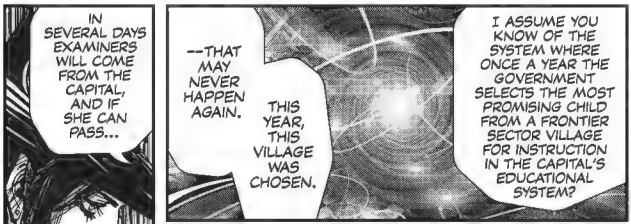
WE WERE PLAYING AT THE FOOT OF THE HILL THAT DAY.
LINA SAID SHE WANTED TO PICK FLOWERS AND MAKE A NECK-LACE.
I REMEMBER TAJEEL-- THE BOY WHO'S STILL MISSING--
OPPOSING HER SILLY IDEA.
IN THE END, THE BOYS GAVE IN AND EMBARKED ON THE MUNDANE TASK.
I MYSELF PICKED SEVERAL AND GAVE THEM TO LINA.
AFTER THAT...
AFTER THAT?
I WAS SOMEWHERE ELSE... AND I TURNED AROUND.
THE NEXT THING I KNEW... HALF A MONTH LATER, WE WERE COMING DOWN THE HILL.
I REMEM-BER NOTHING IN BE-TWEEN...
THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT YOU TO SEE.

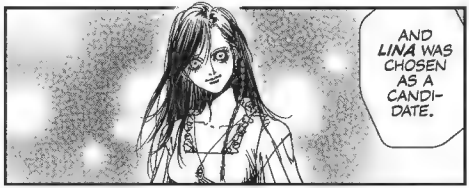
WHAT IS IT?
?
WHAT WOULD THAT BE?
SOMETHING I'M NOT GOOD WITH EITHER.
SUHH
NOTHING. EXCUSE ME.
HAVE YOU CLIMBED THE HILL SINCE THEN?
WELL... PERSONALLY, I THINK I'M AVERAGE AND ORDINARY...
BUT PERHAPS YOU'D BEST ASK MY STUDENTS?
CUORE WENT INSANE. IS THERE ANYTHING ODD ABOUT YOURSELF?
I HAVE NOT.
ONE MORE THING.
?!

ガタッ
YOW!
?!
HEY! WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA? THIS'S RUDE!
SUCH BEHAVIOR BEFORE A GUEST...
NO FAIR, MR. MEYER!
PLEASE LET US TALK TO HIM TOO!
D-D-DON'T BE RIDICU-LOUS!
PRETTY SUSPI-CIOUS, MR. MEYER!
YOU'RE ALL ALONE WITH SUCH A DREAMY GUY.

PLEASE DO NOT TAKE ANY OFFENSE TOWARD IT.
I'M SORRY YOU HAD TO SEE SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
ふぅ
AHH
THANKS TO A FAULT IN THE WEATHER CONTROLLER FOR THIS SECTOR, MORE THAN HALF THE YEAR IS LOCKED INTO WINTER.
TRAVELERS SELDOM VISIT OUR VILLAGE...
THIS IS A VERY CRUEL PLACE FOR GIRLS WHO HAVE COME OF AGE.
THAT ISN'T JUST HERE.
ALL SMALL VILLAGES ARE LIKE THAT.
UH, MAY I ASK YOU SOME-THING?
SUCH AS?
AND THOUGH IT COMES, THEY WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE VILLAGE.
SPRING WILL COME SOON, THOUGH.


WOULD YOU AT LEAST LEAVE LINA ALONE?
BUT SHE'S ONE OF THE RETURN-EES.
AND SHE WILL BE ONE WHO LEAVES.
...TO THE CAPITAL, I HEAR.
COR-RECT.


I ASSUME YOU KNOW OF THE SYSTEM WHERE ONCE A YEAR THE GOVERNMENT SELECTS THE MOST PROMISING CHILD FROM A FRONTIER SECTOR VILLAGE FOR INSTRUCTION IN THE CAPITAL'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM?
--THAT MAY NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN.
THIS YEAR, THIS VILLAGE WAS CHOSEN.
IN SEVERAL DAYS EXAMINERS WILL COME FROM THE CAPITAL, AND IF SHE CAN PASS...
NOW I SEE.


AND *LINA* WAS CHOSEN AS A CANDI-DATE.

IF THE CHOSEN CHILD DOES WELL, THERE'S CORRE-SPONDING COLLATERAL FOR THE VILLAGE.
I KNOW THAT MUCH, AT LEAST.
DO YOU REALIZE WHAT THIS WOULD MEAN?
SHE REPRE-SENTS HOPE FOR US ALL.
?!
DO YOU ALSO HAVE THE VILLAGE'S BEST INTERESTS IN MIND?
WELL, THAT IS TRUE...
わぁぁぁぁっ
AGHHHH
あぁぁぁ
AGHH
AGHHH
ぁぁぁ

DASH
SOME-
THING
WAS IN
THE
FOREST!
LEAP
BEFORE
I KNEW IT,
BLOOD
WAS...

OHNNN
SWISH
CHOOOSH

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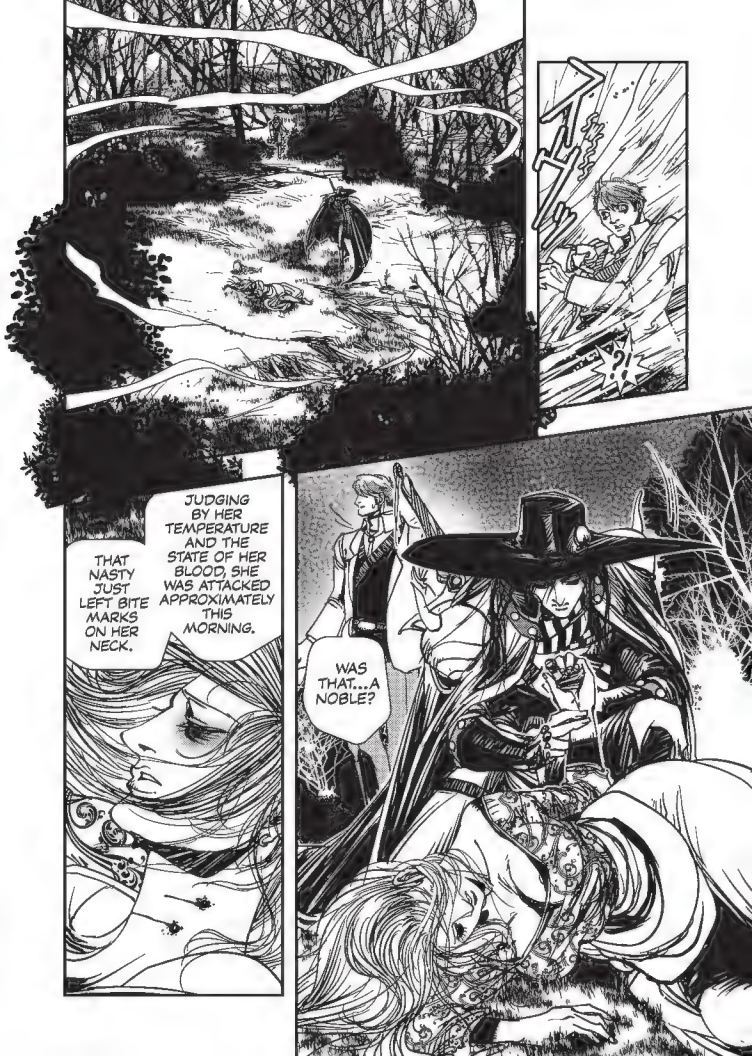
OHNNN
FWSS
OI

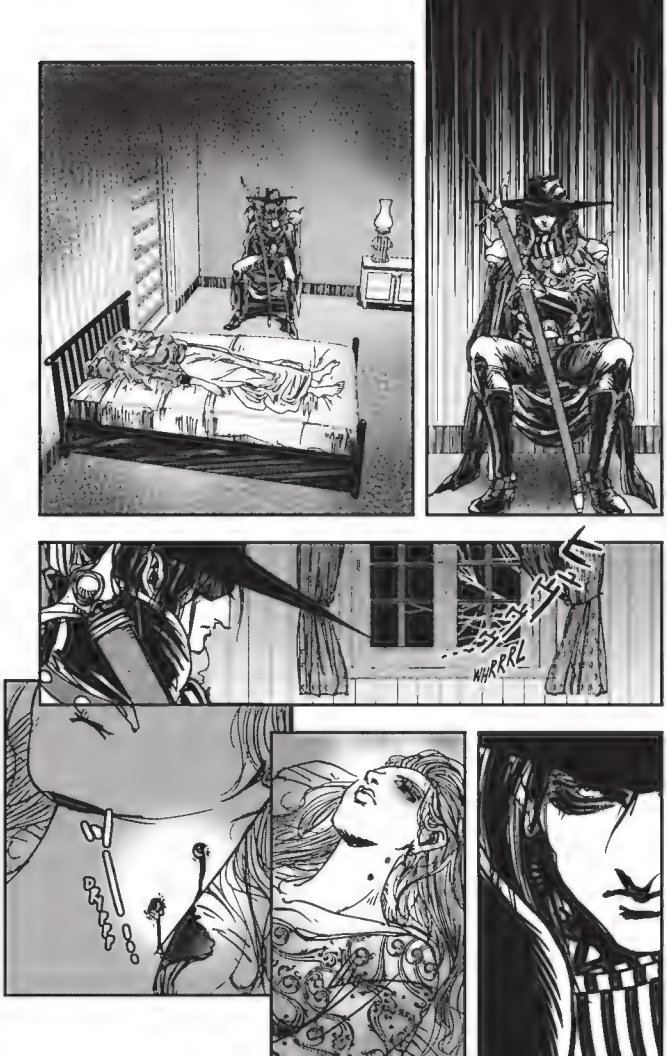

...
?!
WAS THAT...A NOBLE?
JUDGING BY HER TEMPERATURE AND THE STATE OF HER BLOOD, SHE WAS ATTACKED APPROXIMATELY THIS MORNING.
THAT NASTY JUST LEFT BITE MARKS ON HER NECK.

THEN WHAT WAS THAT THING?
I DON'T KNOW.
BUT THIS'S MY SECOND ENCOUNTER WITH IT.
?

...
...

JUDGING BY THE WOUND, THE ONE WHO ATTACKED HER IS THE TYPE THAT GETS ATTACHED TO ITS PREY.
IT WILL PROBABLY COME FOR HER AGAIN TONIGHT.

THIS IS TOO DANGER-OUS!
I CAN'T BE RESPON-SIBLE FOR THIS.
USING KAISER'S WIFE AS BAIT TO LURE IT OUT...
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO HIRED THE LAST HUNTER, TOO.
PUT SOME FAITH IN THE MAN I HIRED!
JUST LEAVE IT TO HIM, SHERIFF.
NEVER MIND THAT-- HAVEN'T YOU ROUNDED UP THAT CUORE YET?
WELL, HE WASN'T IN HIS USUAL RAT'S NEST.
HOW-EVER,
THE VIGILANCE COMMITTEE AND YOUTH BRIGADE ARE ALL LOOKING FOR HIM SO I THINK WE'LL FIND HIM IN NO TIME.
ALL WE NEED IS HIM HERE...
SO YOU GET THIS DONE!
THEN IF A VAMPIRE SHOWS UP, THERE'LL BE NO MORE SUSPICION ON THEM THREE.


WHRRRL

SHIK
ROSE
BA
ひた…
KRSH!

KRASH
ォォォォォォォ
OOOOO

オォォォ
OHHHH
オォォ…
わぁぁっ
ドォォ…
HOHHH
ヒュゥゥ

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ズ!
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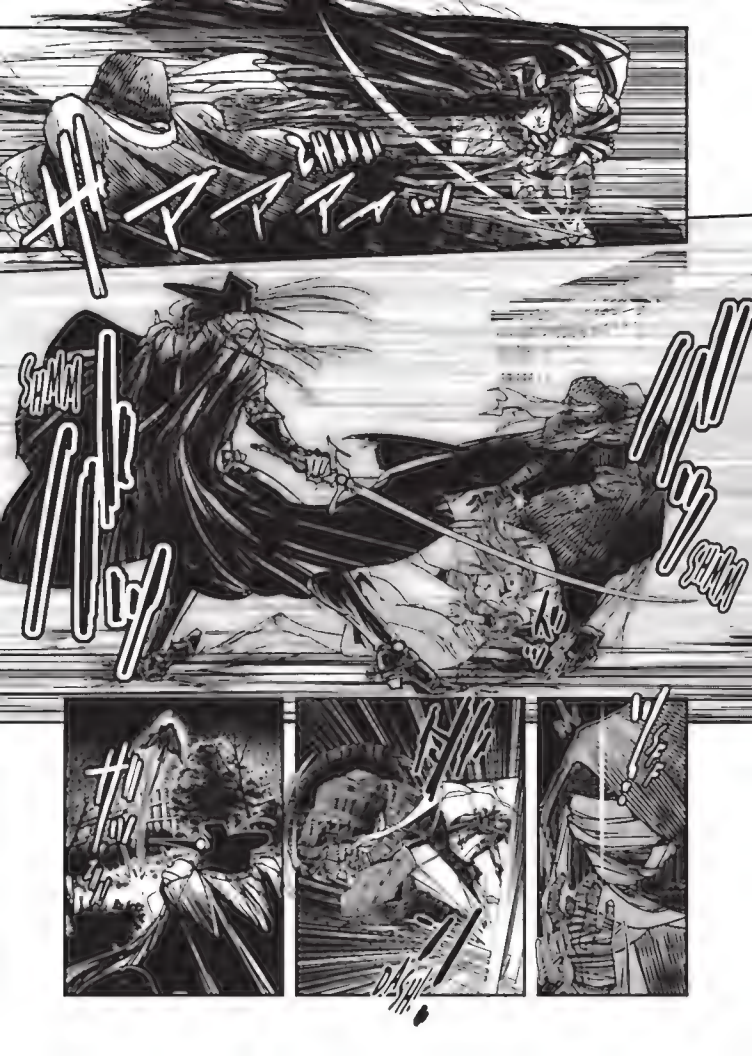
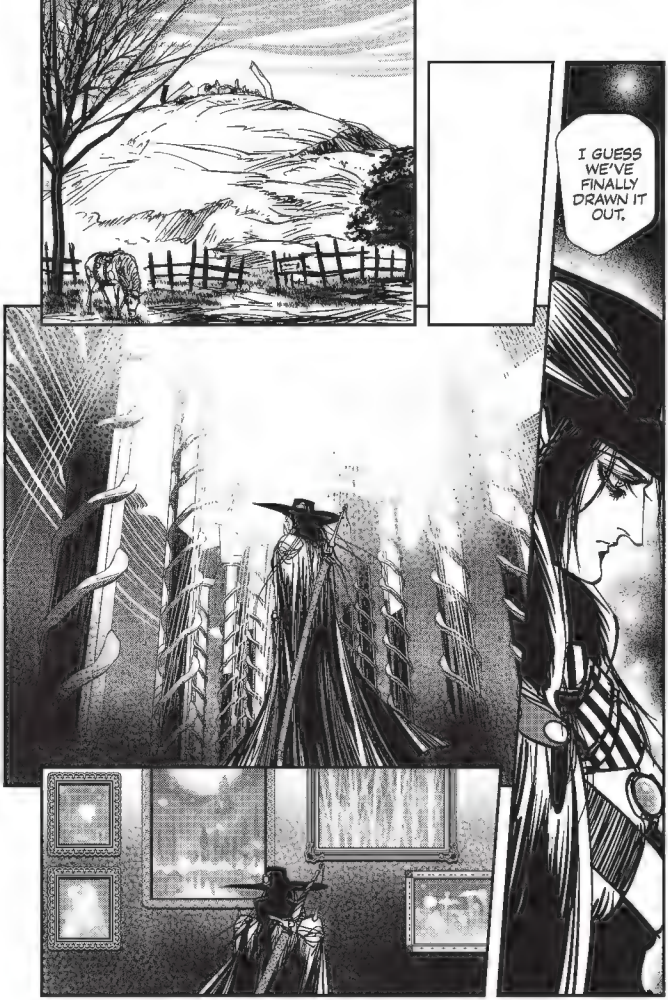
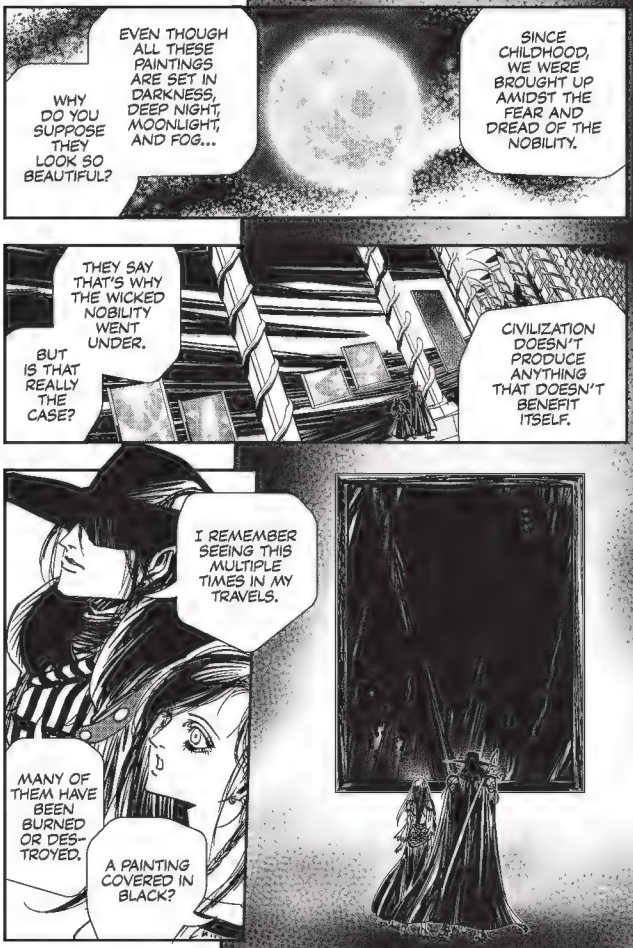

キアアア

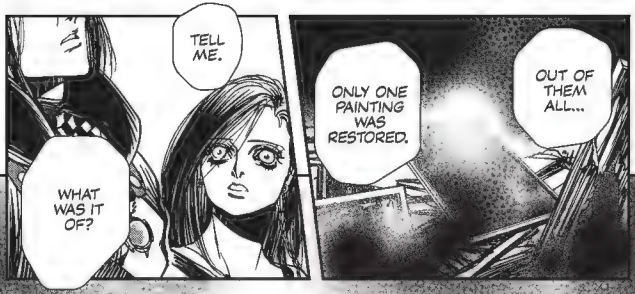
LUNGE
CLASH
SLASH
SLASH
SLASH
CLANG

WHIRRR
BOOM
IS EVERY-ONE ALRIGHT?
WHAT HAP-PENED?
SUDDENLY WE WERE FLOATING IN MIDAIR...
THEN WE WENT HEAD-FIRST INTO THE FLOOR.
CAN'T MAKE ANY SENSE OF IT.
I DON'T KNOW.
IF NOTHING ELSE...THIS SHOULD CLEAR UP ANY DOUBT ABOUT THE THREE OF US, I'D SAY?


I GUESS WE'VE FINALLY DRAWN IT OUT.

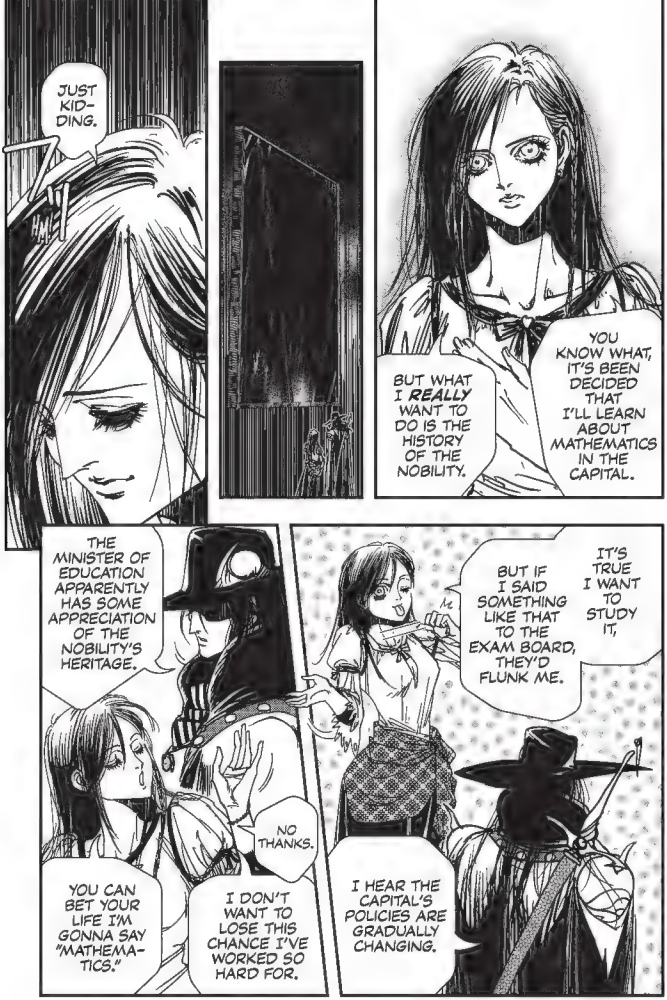
THE NOBILITY PAINTED EVERY ONE OF THESE, DIDN'T THEY?
AH, RIGHT.
--YOU CAN CLIMB THAT HILL NORMALLY.
YOU COME HERE OFTEN?
SORT OF.
THEY'RE BEAUTI-FUL...


WHY DO YOU SUPPOSE THEY LOOK SO BEAUTIFUL?
EVEN THOUGH ALL THESE PAINTINGS ARE SET IN DARKNESS, DEEP NIGHT, MOONLIGHT, AND FOG...
SINCE CHILDHOOD, WE WERE BROUGHT UP AMIDST THE FEAR AND DREAD OF THE NOBILITY.
BUT IS THAT REALLY THE CASE?
THEY SAY THAT'S WHY THE WICKED NOBILITY WENT UNDER.
CIVILIZATION DOESN'T PRODUCE ANYTHING THAT DOESN'T BENEFIT ITSELF.
MANY OF THEM HAVE BEEN BURNED OR DES-TROYED.
A PAINTING COVERED IN BLACK?
I REMEMBER SEEING THIS MULTIPLE TIMES IN MY TRAVELS.



NOBILITY RISING FROM THEIR COFFINS, REACHING FOR THE SUN.

REACHING...
FOR THE SUN...
I STUDIED IN SECRET.
ABOUT THE NOBILITY ...


JUST KIDDING.
YOU KNOW WHAT, IT'S BEEN DECIDED THAT I'LL LEARN ABOUT MATHEMATICS IN THE CAPITAL.
BUT WHAT I REALLY WANT TO DO IS THE HISTORY OF THE NOBILITY.
IT'S TRUE I WANT TO STUDY IT,
BUT IF I SAID SOMETHING LIKE THAT TO THE EXAM BOARD, THEY'D FLUNK ME.
I HEAR THE CAPITAL'S POLICIES ARE GRADUALLY CHANGING.
THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION APPARENTLY HAS SOME APPRECIATION OF THE NOBILITY'S HERITAGE.
NO THANKS.
I DON'T WANT TO LOSE THIS CHANCE I'VE WORKED SO HARD FOR.
YOU CAN BET YOUR LIFE I'M GONNA SAY "MATHEMATICS."

AND I'M WITH YOU ON THIS UNTIL THE END.
I'M YOUR ASSISTANT, AFTER ALL.
HEY, THAT'S NOT FOR YOU TO DECIDE.
BOSS?
BY THE BY, WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME WHAT BRINGS YOU TO THESE RUINS...
HA!
TURN!
...BOSS.
THOUGHT SO.
SO?
OH, WAIT UP!
TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED HERE TEN YEARS AGO.

I'M COMING WITH YOU!

EDIBLE MOSS: AN ALL-PURPOSE FOOD SUBSTITUTE FOR EVERYTHING FROM STEAK TO SOUP TO JAM. WHEN PUT THROUGH A CENTRIFUGE, ITS EXTRACT CAN BE USED AS A SALVE. A HIGH-GRADE ITEM.

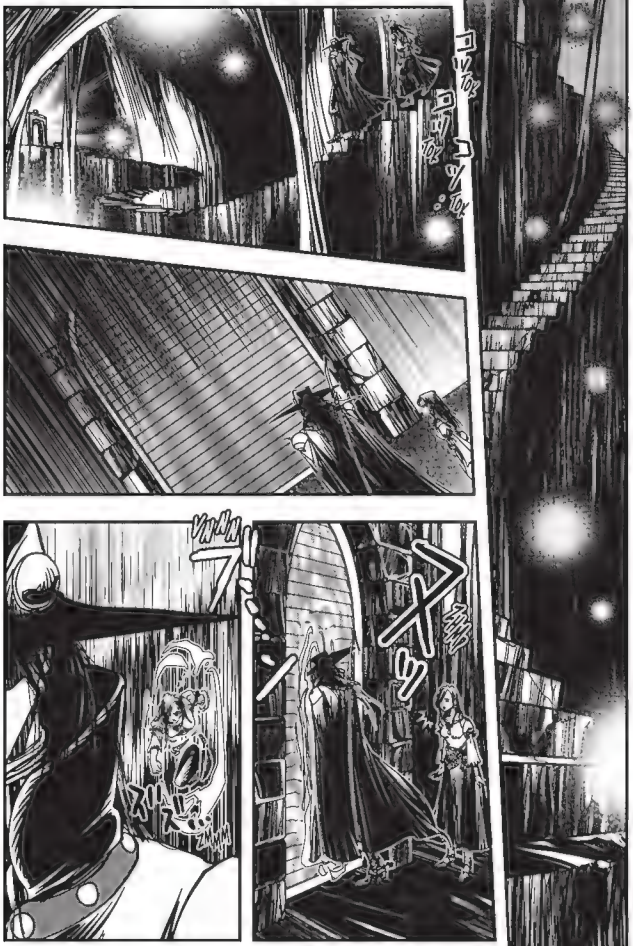
BESS !!
SHIT!
DASH!
SHE FUCKIN' WENT OUT ALONE TO GATHER MOSS!
SON OF A BITCH!
GET YOUR HANDS OFF HER!
SHHM
THUD!

AWOOH
*☆○■!

SWOP
?!
ELECTRIC SHOCKS DON'T HURT IT?!

KI-KI-KI-KI-KI
DAMNED VAMPIRE HOLD-OVER.
THAT'S WHAT YOU GET, FREAK.
EAT SOME ELECTRIC SHOCK, WHY DON'TCHA.
THEN DIE, CRUSHED IN GIANT SPIDER JAWS.
ITCH
LET'S HAVE A LOOK SEE AT YOUR FACE BEFORE YOU CROAK.
!
YOU CUORE, LINA, MEYER, OR MAYBE--
Y- YOU'RE --

PAPAAAAA!
ハッ
?!
わっ
あああああ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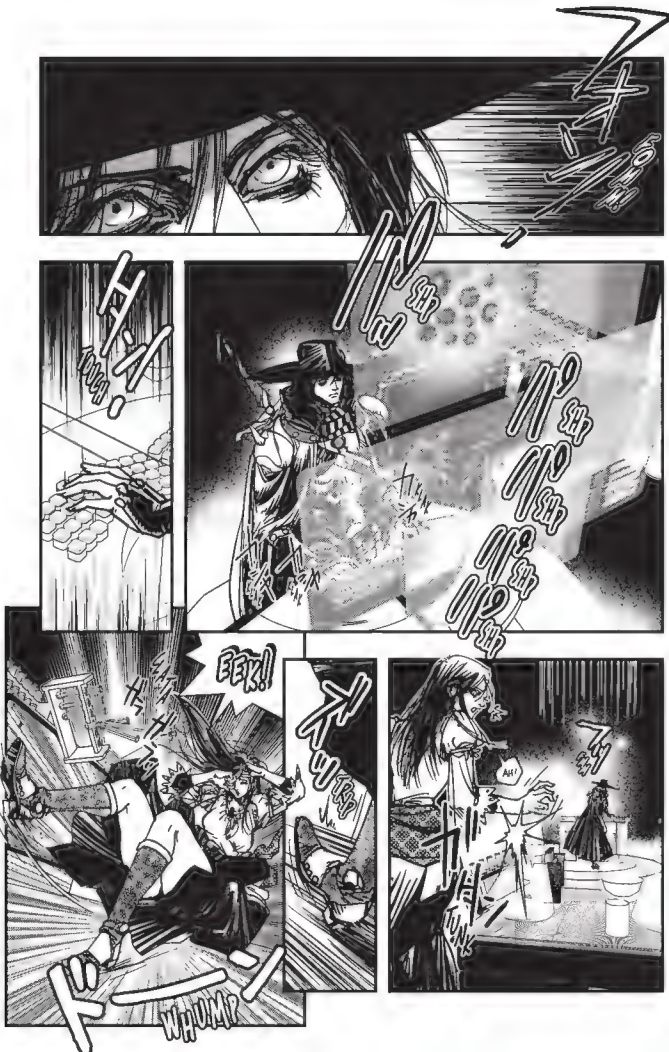
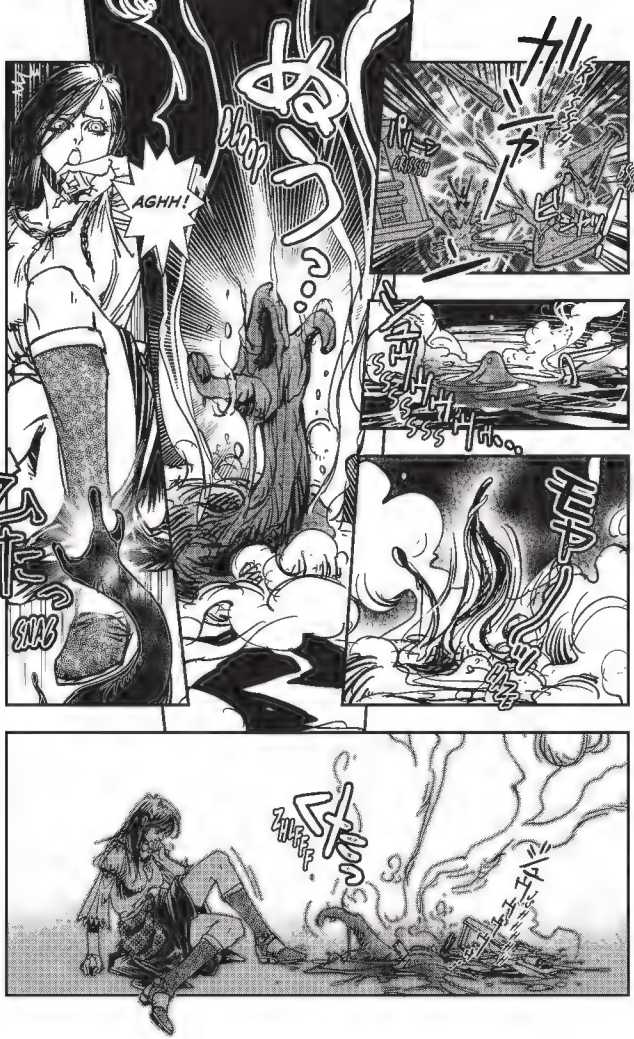
WOW!
TO THINK THERE WAS STILL A PLACE LIKE THIS...


SHK
SHK
SHK
SHK
SHK
SHK
SHK
AH!
BEK!!
WHUMP


ぬうっ…
blood
AGHH!
ひたっ
SNAG
カッ
パーン
CRASH!
ビシッ!!
ズズズ…
モヤ
ゴゴゴ
ゴゴゴ
ゴゴゴ

WH-WHAT WAS THAT...?
A HOMUN-CULUS-- ARTIFICIAL LIFE BORN FROM LIGHTNING AND ETHER.
AH!
WHAT THE HELL'D THEY DO HERE ...?
SURE SHOCKED ME...
D!
SHOMM

ARG HHH!!
ヒュ
あああ
うう
-000-WAO-00
うぁぅ
あぁ..
ざわ
ざわ..ざわ
STOP IT!
D, THAT'S ENOUGH!
ズズ
ZMMM

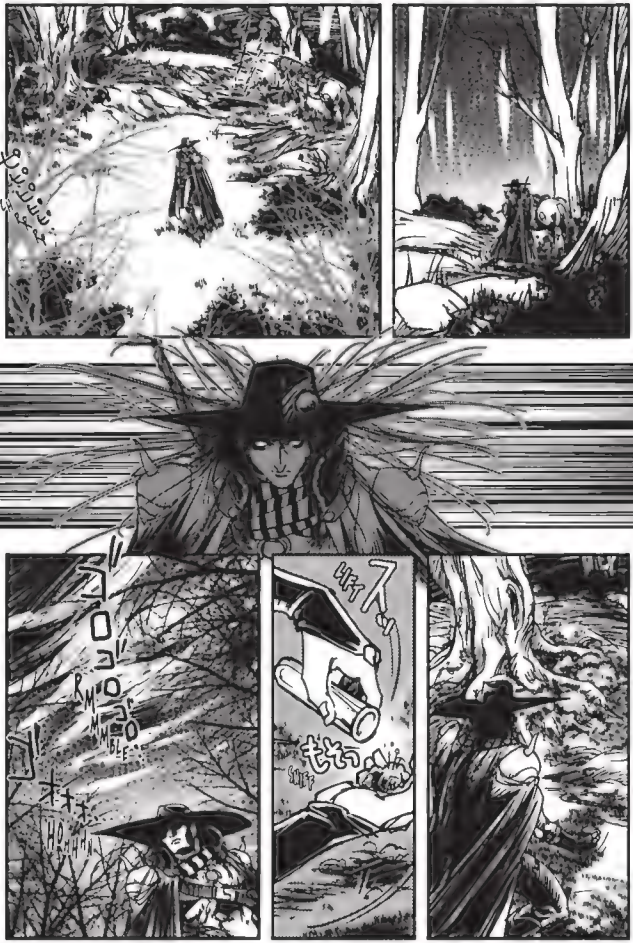
LOOKS LIKE WE'D BEST HEAD BACK.
IT WASN'T ALONE, THEN.
WHAT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

LEAP
AND NO ASSISTANTS.
I WANT NO INTERFERENCE WHATSOEVER WITH MY WORK FROM HERE ON OUT.
BUT...
WE PART HERE.
YOU GO BACK.
YOU CAN GO HOME OR TO SCHOOL, BUT DON'T MAKE ANY STOPS ALONG THE WAY.
WAIT!
...TAKE ME TOO...
BA DADUMP
YOU'VE GOT TO GET TO THE CAPITAL!
UH?

BOOM!!
BOOM!!
BOOM!!
CLOP
CLOP
CLOP
YOU'RE FERN OF THE VIGILANCE COMMITTEE?
YOU NEED SOMETHIN'?
WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?
YOU WILL HAND THE BOY OVER.
DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT I DO FOR A LIVIN'?
I'VE GOT A GUARD BEAST I RAISED IN HERE.
PAT
PAT
HAH!
YOU MAKE ME SOUND LIKE THE BAD GUY.
THIS PLACE'S LIKE MY HOUSE'S GARDEN.

YOU CAN ASK HIM YOURSELF IF IT'S TRUE.
IT GOES WITHOUT SAYIN' HE'D BE BETTER OFF THERE THAN GOIN' WITH SOME HUNTER FROM WHO KNOWS WHERE.
AS HE'S GOT NO KIN.
I'LL BE SEEIN' AFTER HIM AT MY PLACE STARTIN' TODAY.
SNAKK
SNAKK
LEAVIN' ALREADY?

WH... WHEN DID HE...?
MAYBE A LITTLE THREAT'LL DO YOU GOOD!
NEXT TIME YOU COME HERE, YOU'D BEST HAVE THAT DULL BLADE A' YOURS DRAWN.
THINGS'VE GOTTEN INTERESTING.
THAT BOY REALLY DID WANT TO GO WITH ME.
WHAT IS IT?
THE SMELL OF BLOOD.
AHH...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RUMBLE
IT SURE IS.
OH, MR. MEYER. QUITE THE STORM, THIS IS...
FOR A PERSON, THAT'S TOO...
WHAT THE?
THERE'S SUPPOSED TO BE A FARM UP THAT WAY...

きゃあ
!
?!
ピチャ
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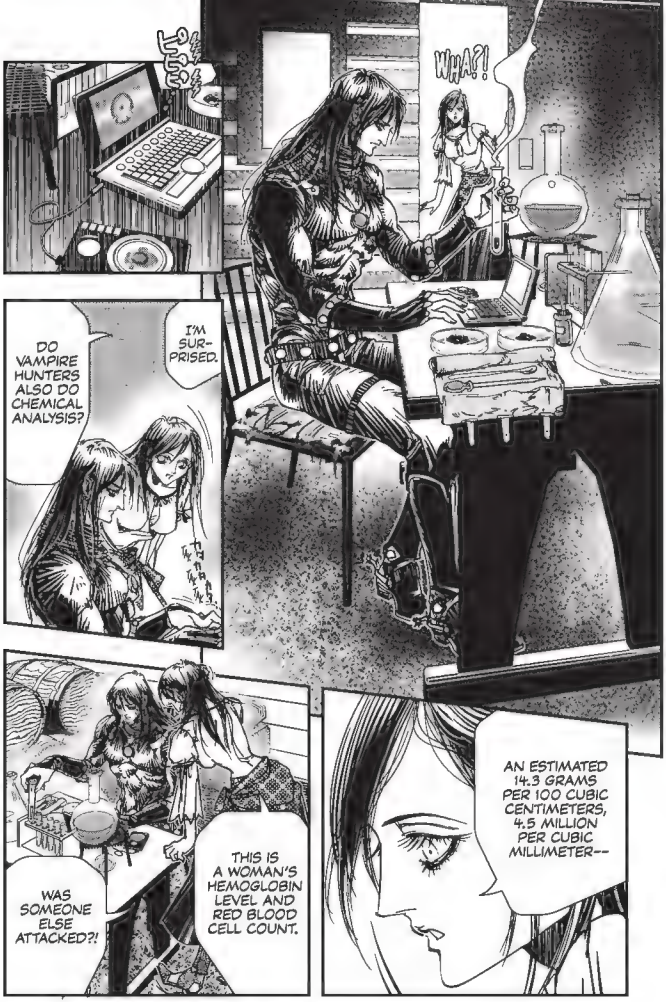
ハッ
ハッ

TREMBLE
I...I'LL SHOOT!
K-KEEP AWAY!
THESE THINGS... AREN'T HUMAN!
TWO ANIMALS! NOT TWO PEOPLE.
AUGHH!
LUNGE
LUNGE
TREMBLE

ドン!! BANG!
ドドドド... ZHHHH
ドン!! BANG!
AND NO ASSISTANTS.
ムッ
HM! HE'S HERE.
AS IF I'D GIVE UP.
PEEK
ぴくっ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WHA?!
I'M SURPRISED.
DO VAMPIRE HUNTERS ALSO DO CHEMICAL ANALYSIS?
AN ESTIMATED 14.3 GRAMS PER 100 CUBIC CENTIMETERS, 4.5 MILLION PER CUBIC MILLIMETER--
THIS IS A WOMAN'S HEMOGLOBIN LEVEL AND RED BLOOD CELL COUNT.
WAS SOMEONE ELSE ATTACKED?!

--THIS ONE'S A MAN'S.
WHICH MEANS--
WHOSE BLOOD IS THIS?
SO, TELL YOUR ASSISTANT.
GOOD DE-DUCTION.
I CAN SEE WHY YOU WERE CHOSEN.
DA-MN
IGNORE
BLOOD FROM THE WOMAN LAST NIGHT'S BEEN ADDED TOO.
THE WOMAN'S BLOOD WAS ON THE FOREST FLOOR WHEN I WENT LOOKING FOR CUORE.
COMPUTING
AMAZ-ING!
YOU'RE MAKING THE COMPUTER "COMPUTE" THE NOBLE'S TRUE IDENTITY FROM THE SALIVA MIXED INTO THE BLOOD OF THE ATTACKED WOMEN.
OH, OKAY.

SHIP!
RECOG-
NIZE
THE
FACE?
NO.
HE'S
NOT
FROM
THE
VILL-
AGE.
AND
HE'S NOT
TAJEEL...
...WHICH
IS
GOOD.

WHAT'RE YOU CRYING FOR?
HMPH.
I AM STILL A GIRL, YOU KNOW.
RAINY DAYS GET ME ALL SENTI-MENTAL.
IT'S REALLY COMING DOWN TODAY.
THE NOBILITY HAS PROBLEMS WITH RAIN.
WHY IS THAT?
I DON'T KNOW EITHER.

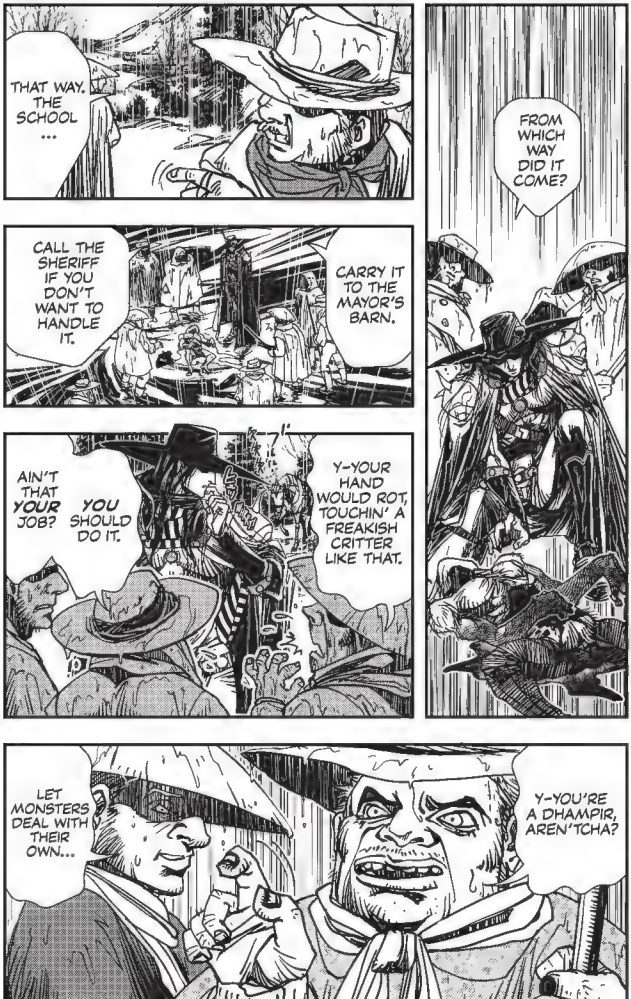
FROM A BIOLOGICAL STANDPOINT, THERE ARE STILL MANY MYSTERIES ABOUT THEIR METABOLISM.
YOU MEAN LIKE HOW THEY CAN'T CROSS RUNNING WATER AND HOW SUNLIGHT DESTROYS THEM?
ZHAAAAA
AS FAR AS I KNOW,
THEIR BIOLOGICAL WEAKNESSES ARE LINKED TO A DEFECT OF THE SPECIES.
IT'S NOT JUST THAT.
WHY THEY CAN ONLY GO OUT AT NIGHT; THE REASON A SINGLE PLAIN WOODEN STAKE CAN KILL A BODY THAT CAN REGENERATE...
...FROM BULLET WOUNDS AND ALL KINDS OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS.
IF THEY HAD GRASPED EVEN A CLUE TOWARDS UNDER-STANDING IT...
THE DAY HUMANS BECAME INHERITORS OF EARTH PROBABLY WOULDN'T HAVE COME.

PLOP
ISN'T THAT A SMIDGEN PATHETIC FOR US HUMANS?
THE NOBILITY DIED OFF AND HUMANS REMAINED... BUT EVEN NOW...
...WE'RE STILL THREATENED BY THE PHANTOMS OF THE DEPARTED.
IF I WERE TO GO OUTSIDE NOW, MY BODY TEMPERATURE WOULD DROP TWO DEGREES.
MY RUNNING SPEED WOULD DROP BY THIRTY PERCENT, AND MY METABOLIC RATE ITSELF WOULD GO DOWN A LEVEL.

BUT YOU ALL...
...
...
...
HUH?
くいっ
SQUEEZE
IT'S COLD.
ひたっ

ギャアア
アアアア…
?!
STAY THERE.

ズバッ
ズバッ

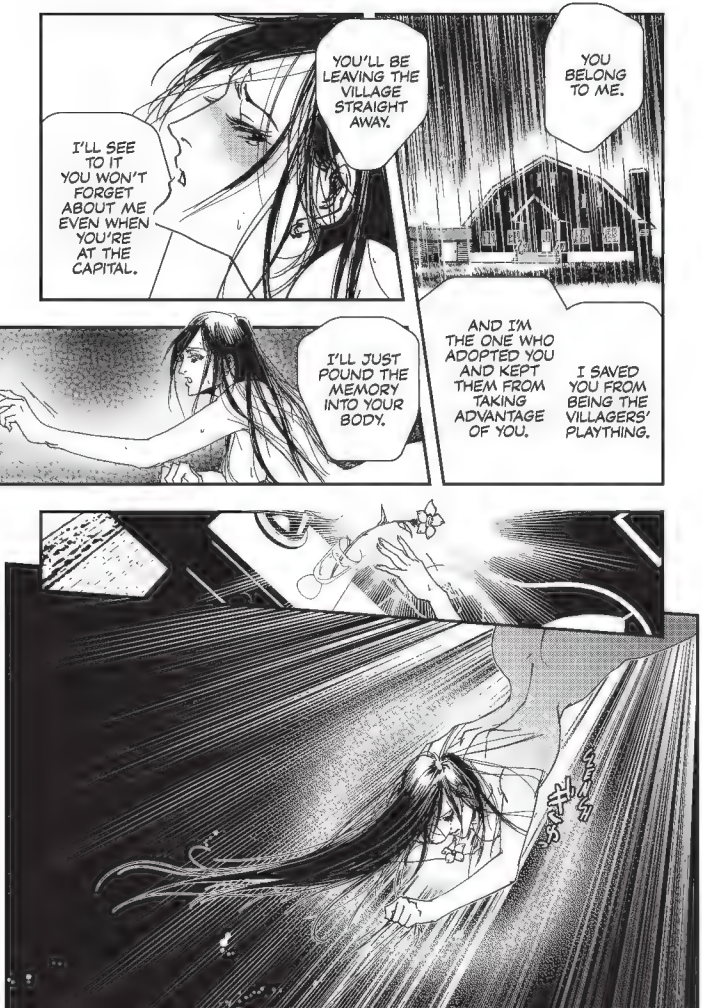

THAT WAY. THE SCHOOL ...
FROM WHICH WAY DID IT COME?
CALL THE SHERIFF IF YOU DON'T WANT TO HANDLE IT.
CARRY IT TO THE MAYOR'S BARN.
AIN'T THAT YOUR JOB?
YOU SHOULD DO IT.
Y-YOUR HAND WOULD ROT, TOUCHIN' A FREAKISH CRITTER LIKE THAT.
LET MONSTERS DEAL WITH THEIR OWN...
Y-YOU'RE A DHAMPIR, AREN'TCHA?

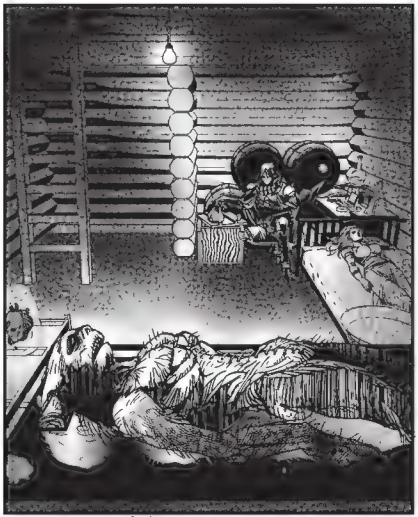
I SAID, CARRY IT.
わっ!
SLASH!
NO, GET A STRETCHER
WHOA!!
GET BY THAT PART?
THE SCENT'S VANISHED.

YOUR TURN.
HH AH HH
WHAT GIVES? I WAS JUST HAVING A GOOD DREAM...
AHH, RAIN.
HOLD YOUR HORSES.
AND THE SCENT ?
EAST OF HERE.
ROUGHLY 400 METERS.

THE BODIES SUGGEST THIS WASN'T THE WORK OF A NOBLE.
THERE WERE TWO.
ONE MUST HAVE BEEN THAT THING JUST NOW.
ABOUT AN HOUR AGO.
WELL?
WHOSE BLOOD IS THIS -- THE ONE WHO USED THE WEAPON OR THE ONE WHO WAS SHOT?
I DON'T KNOW.
BUT THERE'S NO ONE HERE NOW.
TTTTT
ZHAAAAA

STOP...
...NO.
WHAT FOR?
BECAUSE THAT HUNTER'S HERE?
I'M A MAN, AND HIS BEAUTY MAKES EVEN MY HEART BEAT FAST.
CAN'T BLAME YOU.
PLEASE... STOP.
WELL, FINE BY ME.
IT'S NICE TO FEEL SOME RESISTANCE SOMETIMES.


YOU BELONG TO ME.
I SAVED YOU FROM BEING THE VILLAGERS' PLAYTHING.
AND I'M THE ONE WHO ADOPTED YOU AND KEPT THEM FROM TAKING ADVANTAGE OF YOU.
YOU'LL BE LEAVING THE VILLAGE STRAIGHT AWAY.
I'LL SEE TO IT YOU WON'T FORGET ABOUT ME EVEN WHEN YOU'RE AT THE CAPITAL.
I'LL JUST POUND THE MEMORY INTO YOUR BODY.
ドサッ



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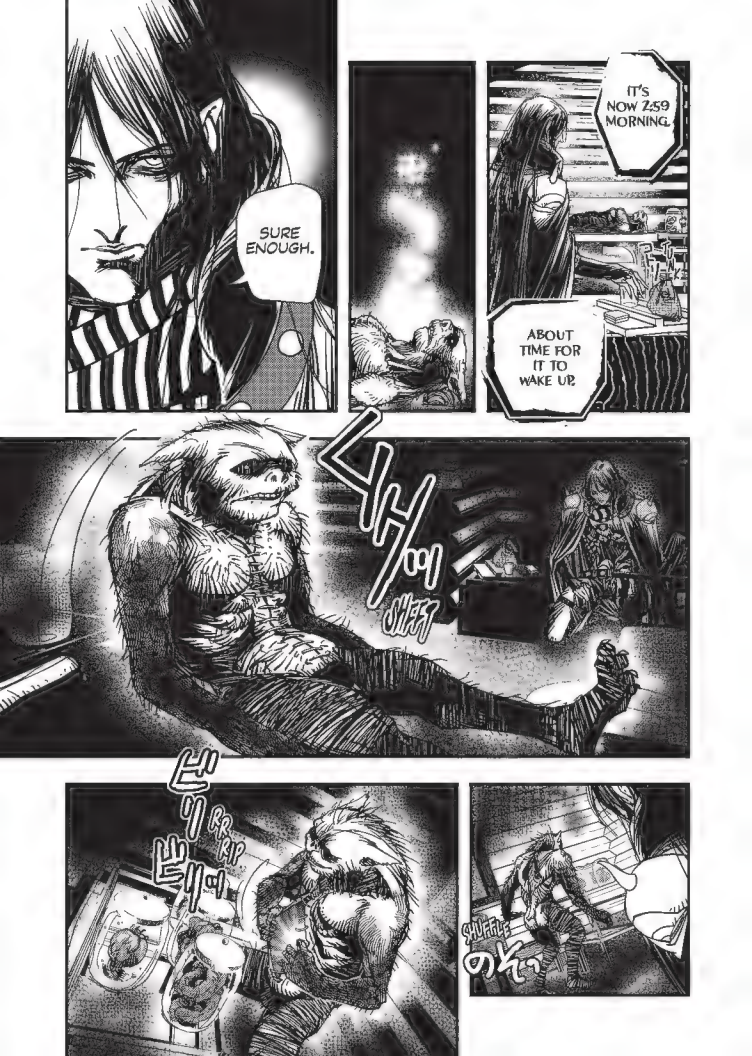
TILT

DEHYDRATED
BLOOD PLASMA

ポトッ

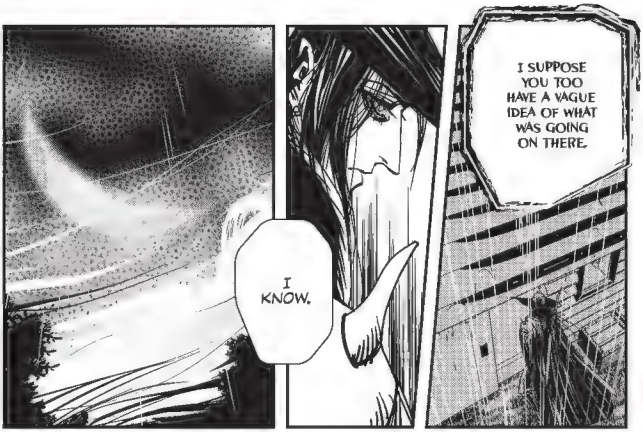

SURE ENOUGH.
IT'S NOW 2:59 MORNING.
ABOUT TIME FOR IT TO WAKE UP.
SHIFT
GR KIP
SHUFFLE

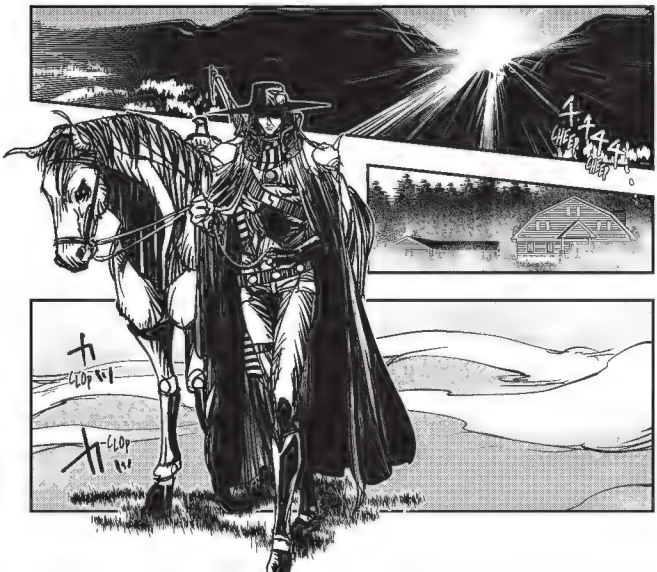
SHLF
SHLF
SHLF
HOBBLE
HOBBLE
HOBBLE
GROW
GROW
GROW
BEEN A LONG TIME, D.
A PSYCHO-LOGICAL ATTACK, EH?
THEY USE ADVANCED TECH-NIQUES.

GESLIN.
HOW ABOUT IT, D?
CAN YOU KILL US?
SLASH
IS THAT ALL YOU'VE GOT?
OUR STAKES ARE GOIN' STRAIGHT INTO YOU.
CRASH
I CAN KILL YOU.

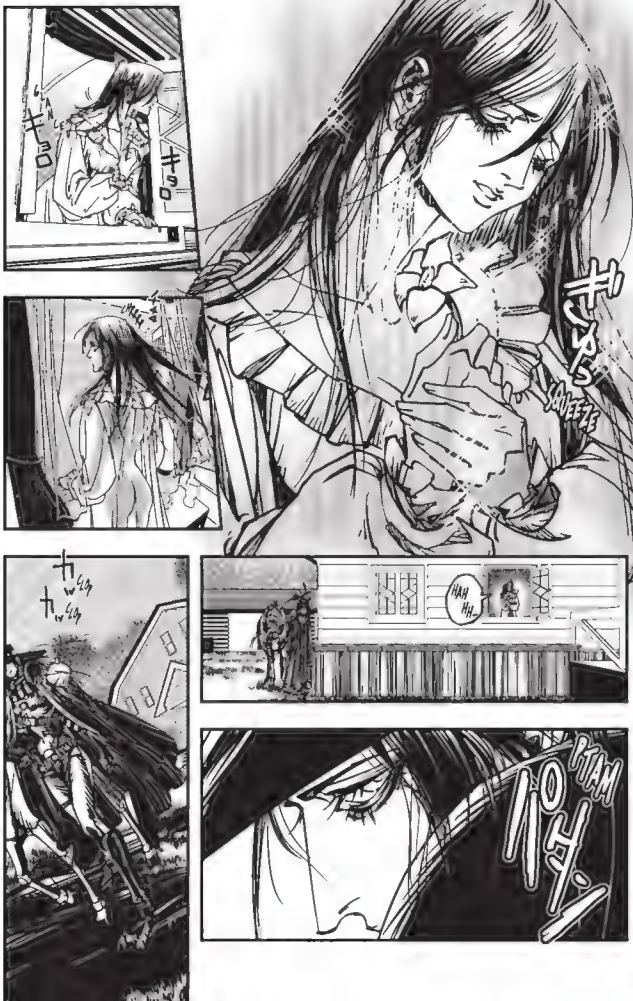
SHK
SHK
SHK
WHRR-RR-LLL
CHIN

YOU CAN'T DENY YOUR BLOOD. BUT--
MY- MY.
AS ALWAYS, YOU DO SOME PRETTY AMAZING THINGS.
NOW THAT MONSTER'S DESTINATION GOES UNKNOWN, THAT SUDDEN DISTRACTION DIDN'T HELP.
NOW, WAS IT JUST COINCIDENCE?
IF IT WAS INTENTIONAL, IT MEANS ALL THE MYSTERIES ARE CONVERGING AT ONE POINT.
IF IT IS, IT WOULD MAKE THAT THING AND YESTERDAY'S CHARACTER UNRELATED.
YEAH, PROBABLY THOSE CASTLE RUINS.


I KNOW.
I SUPPOSE YOU TOO HAVE A VAGUE IDEA OF WHAT WAS GOING ON THERE.


CHEER
CHEER
CLOP
CLOP

キィ
KREE
ハァ…
HAA...
ドン
DON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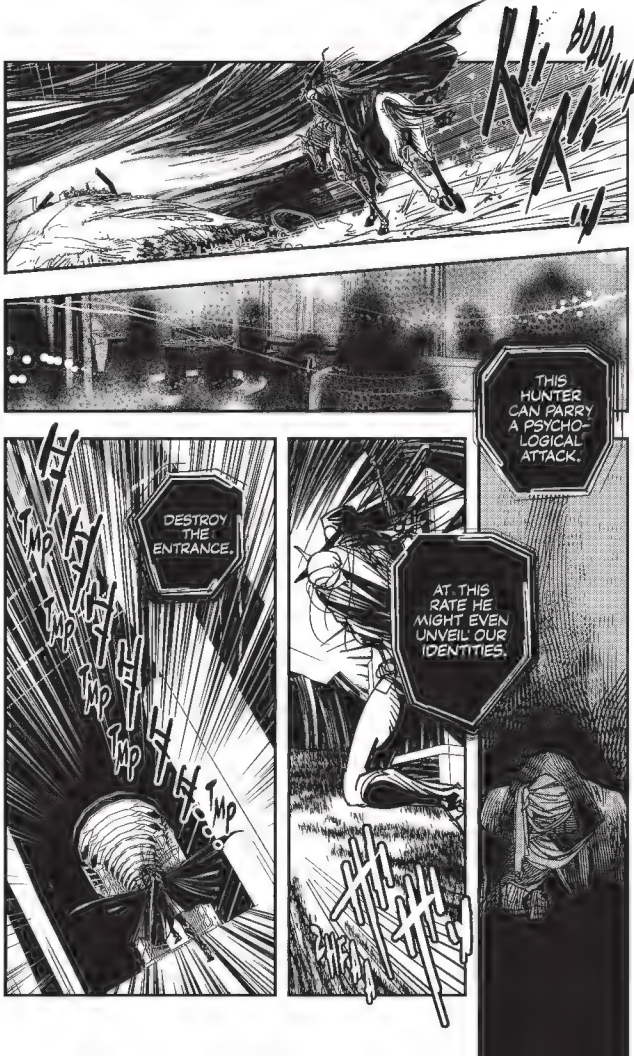
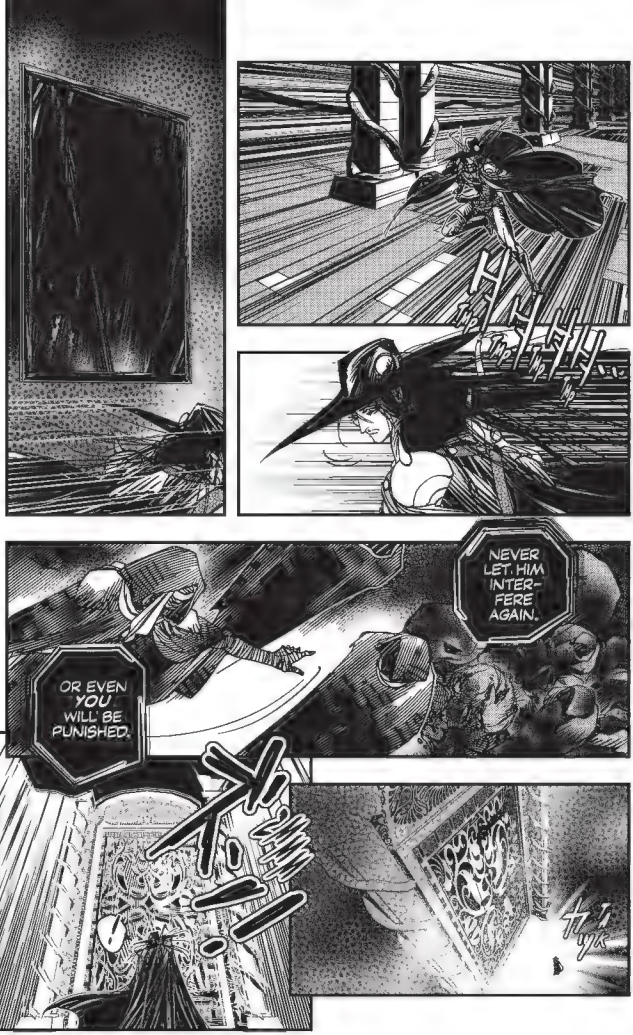
ぎゅっ
HAH HH
PTAM
ドサ…


BOOM
THIS HUNTER CAN PARRY A PSYCHO-LOGICAL ATTACK.
AT THIS RATE HE MIGHT EVEN UNVEIL OUR IDENTITIES.
DESTROY THE ENTRANCE.
TMP


NEVER LET HIM INTERFERE AGAIN.
OR EVEN YOU WILL BE PUNISHED.

BOOM!!
BROARRR

ガラガラ
ズズズ...
HMMM
SOON THIS VILLAGE TOO...NO, THE ENTIRE FRONTIER WILL FALL INTO OUR HANDS.
OHNNNNN

HNN?
TEPES VILLAGE SHOULD BE UP AHEAD -- SHE SOME KINDA WHORE?

SHE'S THERE!!

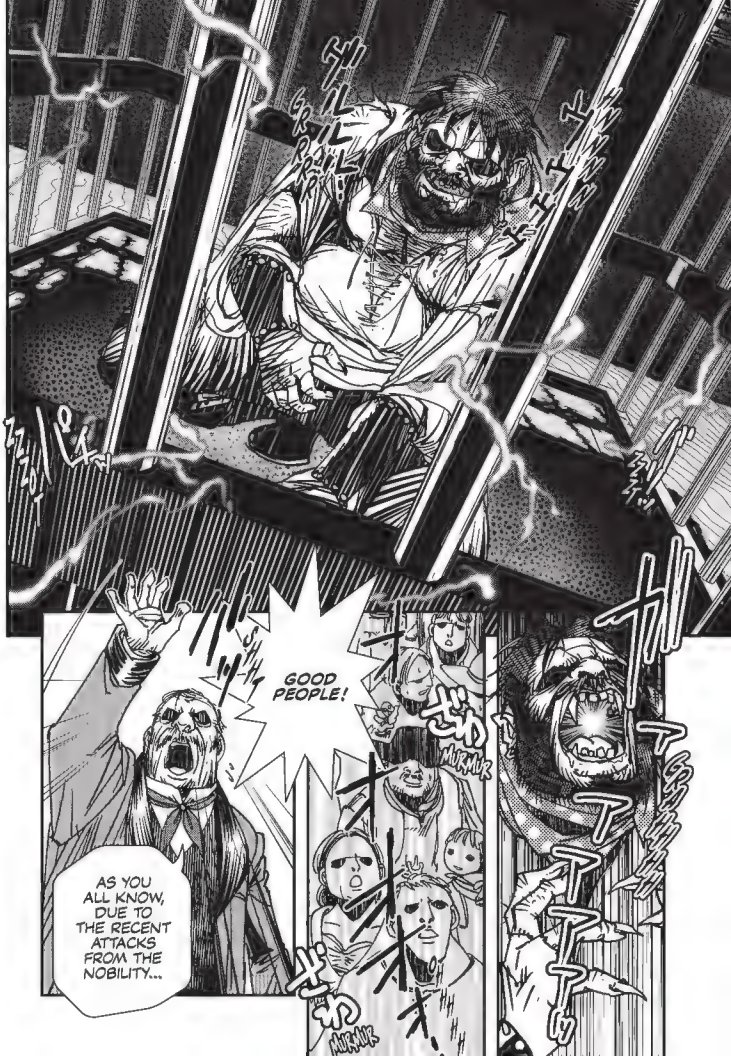
LEER
BUT STILL... BEIN' OUT HERE LOOKIN' LIKE THAT...
MUST BE INSANE.
PERFECT.

GET BACK HERE!

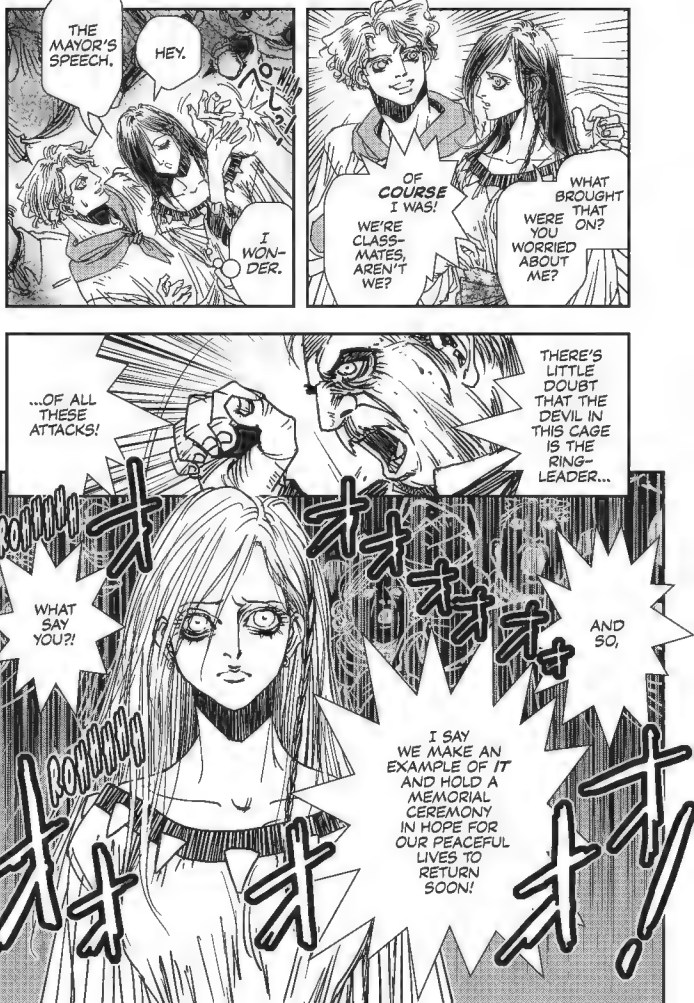
おはっ!
POUNCE
CRUNCH
すっ
SHUNK
ギャあああ
GYAHHHHHHHH

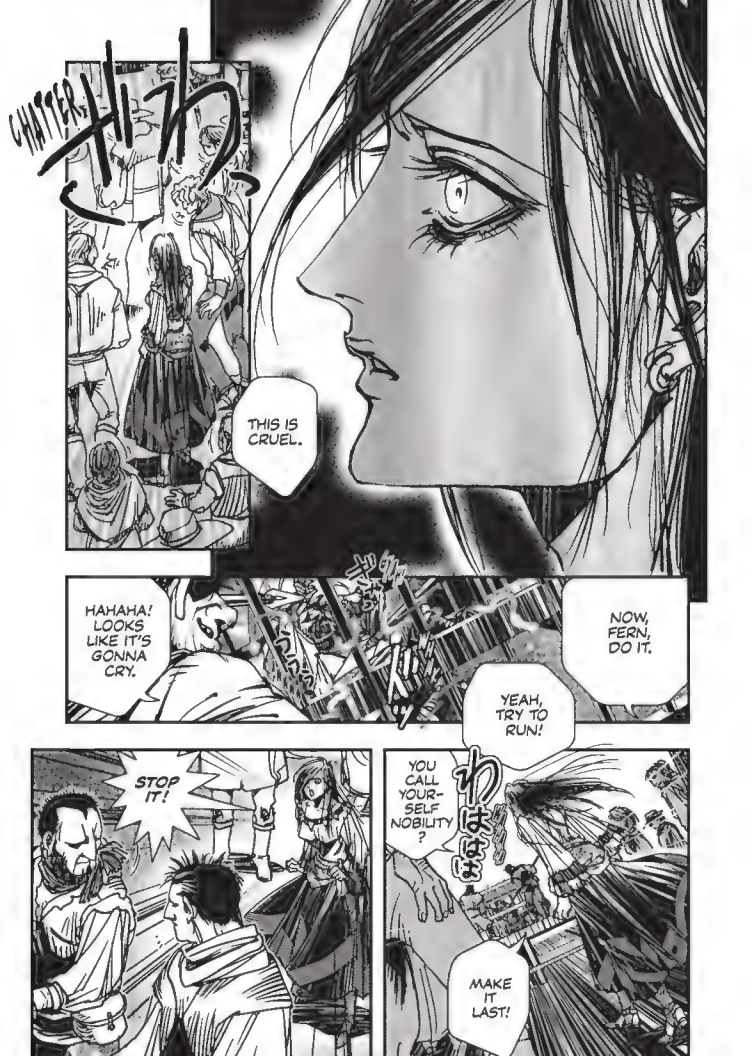
WHAT IN TARNATION?
THREE BLASTS IN A ROW-- ASSEMBLE IN THE SQUARE.
YOU RECKON THEY'VE CAPTURED A LIVE NOBLE OR SOME SUCH?
DOUBT IT.

MR. MEYER'S GONE MISSING...
DID HE DIE?
THEY SAY THAT HUNTER'S GONE...
...MONSTERS IN THE BREEDING FACILITY...
...HEARD HE'D BEEN KILLED.


GOOD PEOPLE!
AS YOU ALL KNOW, DUE TO THE RECENT ATTACKS FROM THE NOBILITY...
MURMUR
MURMUR

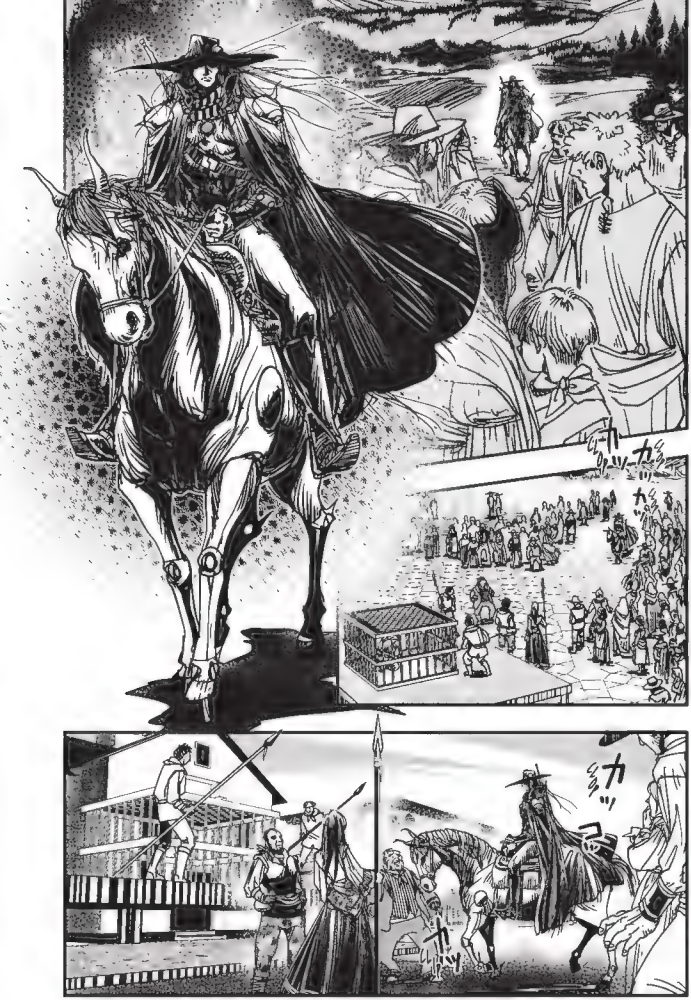
I DIPPED INTO OUR ALREADY MEAGER FINANCES TO HIRE VAMPIRE HUNTERS, BUT THAT PROVED USELESS IN THE END--
FOUR MEMBERS OF THIS VILLAGE HAVE BEEN VICTIMIZED.
YET IT SEEMS WE HAVE TURNED OUT A HAPPY ENDING!
RŌHHHH
WE SHOULD BE PROUD!
...CAPTURED THIS THING ON THE NORTH ROAD!
BECAUSE TODAY, FERN...
THANK GOODNESS, LINA.
EVEN IF HE IS LEADER OF THE VIGILANCE COMMITTEE, THERE AREN'T MANY VAMPIRES CAPTURED ALIVE ON THE FRONTIER.
CALLIS...
NOW THERE'S NO SUSPICION ON YOU.


THE MAYOR'S SPEECH.
HEY.
I WON-DER.
WHAT BROUGHT THAT ON?
WERE YOU WORRIED ABOUT ME?
OF COURSE I WAS!
WE'RE CLASS-MATES, AREN'T WE?
THERE'S LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE DEVIL IN THIS CAGE IS THE RING-LEADER...
...OF ALL THESE ATTACKS!
AND SO,
I SAY WE MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF IT AND HOLD A MEMORIAL CEREMONY IN HOPE FOR OUR PEACEFUL LIVES TO RETURN SOON!
WHAT SAY YOU?!


CHITTER
わっ
THIS IS CRUEL.
NOW, FERN, DO IT.
HAHAHA! LOOKS LIKE IT'S GONNA CRY.
YEAH, TRY TO RUN!
STOP IT!
YOU CALL YOURSELF NOBILITY?
わはは
MAKE IT LAST!

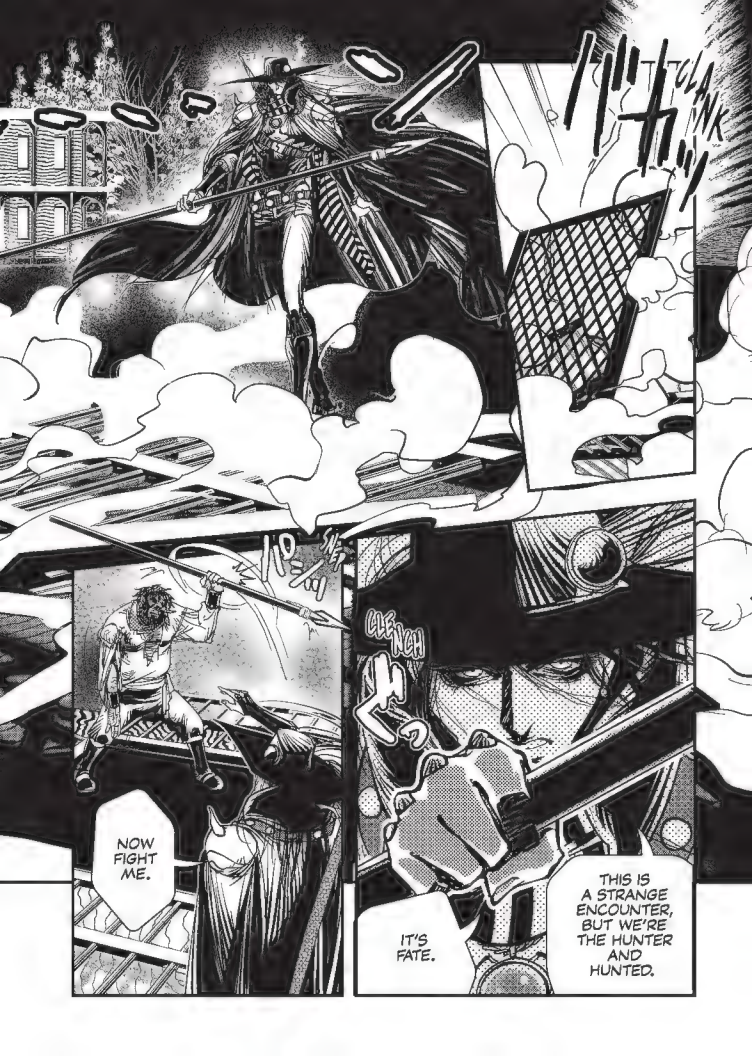
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SHOULD STEP DOWN, MISTER MAYOR!
STEP DOWN!
HOW CRUEL CAN YOU BE?! THAT'S A PERSON!
WH-WHAT'RE YOU UP TO, LINA?
DOING THIS AND CALLING YOURSELF HUMAN? YOU SHOULD BE ASHAMED!
...IN A CAGE AND BEATING HIM TO DEATH!
THROWING AN UNARMED PERSON...
I SAID NO AND I MEAN IT!
YOU LITTLE FOOL!
NOT "MISTER MAYOR"! CAN'T YOU CALL ME "FATHER" ?!

SHE WHO SUGGESTS, VOLUNTEERS, I SAY.
FINE.
WELL, IN THAT CASE...
THERE'S NO PROBLEM IF WE GIVE IT A WEAPON TOO, RIGHT?
THAT WOULD BE MY JOB.
WHAT ON EARTH'RE YOU...



WELL, WHAT NOW?
UH, WELL...
ぱしっ!
WHERE THE HELL'VE YOU BEEN?
IF YOU'RE A HUNTER, GET YOUR JOB DONE AND SPLIT.
I'M THE ONE WHO HIRED HIM...
AND THE PROBLEM'S NOT BEEN FIXED YET...
THERE YOU HAVE IT.
CLACK!
H-HOLD ON!
CLEAR OUT THE VILLAGERS ...!

CLANNNNG
CLANK
GRAHHH
FLING
NOW FIGHT ME.
CLENCH
IT'S FATE.
THIS IS A STRANGE ENCOUNTER, BUT WE'RE THE HUNTER AND HUNTED.


CLANK
CLENCH
THIS IS A STRANGE ENCOUNTER, BUT WE'RE THE HUNTER AND HUNTED.
IT'S FATE.
NOW FIGHT ME.

GLANNNNG
GRAHHH
FLING

FLING
PWSS
HE VANISHED ?!
LEAP
UP ABOVE!

ヒュ
ンンン

I FUL-FILLED YOUR REQUEST.
NEXT TIME YOU'LL BE LISTENING TO MY ORDERS.
WHY... WHY'S THAT...?
SHEET
THUD

NOW, WHAT DO WE DO?
...
...
I KNOW WHAT I SAID BEFORE, BUT...
NOW THE NOBLE'S BEEN DESTROYED...
AND OF COURSE I'LL PAY THE ARRANGED REWARD.
...
...
A JOB WELL DONE.
VERY WELL.

WHO DID THIS?
YOU MEAN IT WASN'T YOU?
IF THAT THING BACK THERE WASN'T THE RING-LEADER, THEN KEEP ON THE JOB...
WAIT, WHERE'RE YOU HEADED?
I STILL WANT TO CHECK ON SOME-THING.
YOU SAID THERE WAS AN ABANDONED WATERWHEEL MILL ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE VILLAGE.
IF YOU NEED ME, THAT'S WHERE I'LL BE.
I'LL COLLECT MY PAYMENT LATER.
BOOM
BOOM

D?
YOU AROUND ?
DON'T TELL ME HE'S LEFT THE VILLAGE ALREADY?
HEYYY, D--
WHERE ARE YA?
SHUCKS.
NOW WHAT SHOULD I DO?
OF ALL THE LOUSY LUCK.

LINA...
?!
--LINA. LINA. LINA.
WHO'S THERE?
I'LL SHOOT!
WHERE ARE YOU?
WHERE ARE YOU?
EEK!

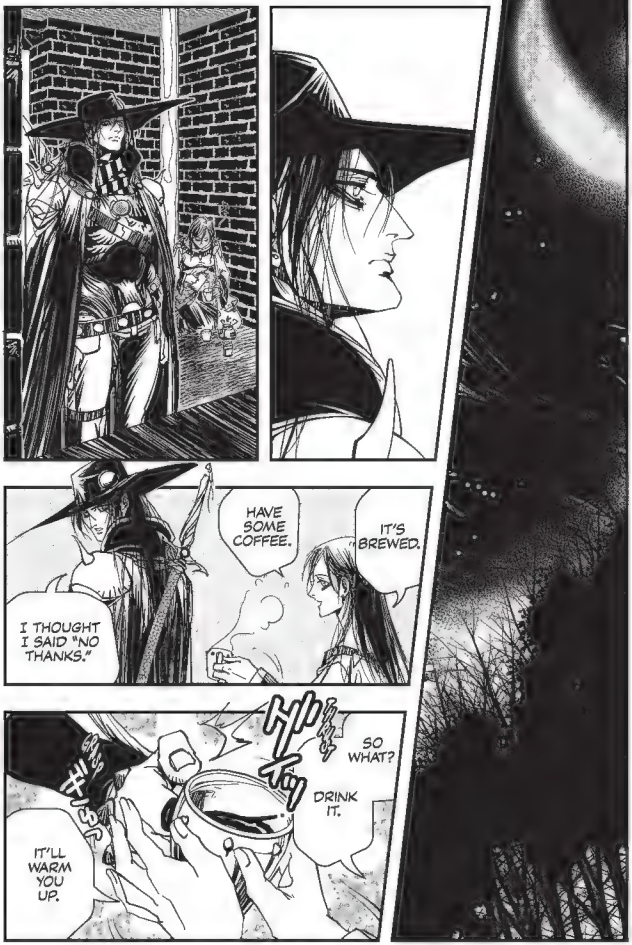
--LINA. LINA.
OWW...
AH!!
ARE YOU... A NOBLE ...?
LINA.
WHAT?! I HEARD YOU THE FIRST TIME!
THEN, WHAT GOT KILLED IN THE SQUARE THIS MORNING WASN'T REALLY...
...SEEING THIS PLACE DOESN'T MAKE YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING ?

WHAT PLACE?
THIS IS...
--LINA. LINA.
WHAT ARE THESE?
WHY'RE THESE PEOPLE CALLING OUT MY NAME?
I DON'T UNDER-STAND.

D?
SHAA
D!

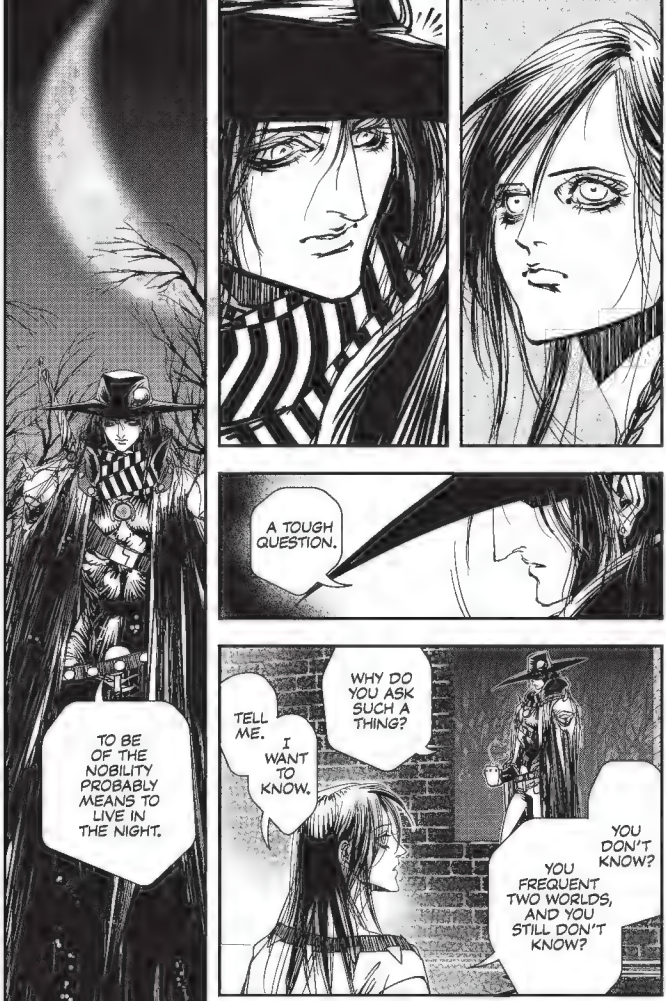
...
...
CLOP
CLOP
CLOP
ARE YOU CRYING?
...
...
SO WHAT?
EVERYONE HAS TIMES WHEN THEY'RE SAD.
YOU DON'T ALWAYS NEED TO ASK.

IS IT STRANGE THAT I CAN CROSS RUNNING WATER?
WELL, I MEAN, YOU ARE A DHAMPIR AND ALL.
...
...
OH, MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID THAT.
IT'S TRUE THAT WATER'S A PROBLEM.
THERE'VE BEEN NOBILITY WHO DROWNED IN IT WAIST-DEEP.
WHY IS THAT?
NOBLE PHYSIOLOGY--- SO MYSTERIOUS ...


HAVE SOME COFFEE.
IT'S BREWED.
I THOUGHT I SAID "NO THANKS."
SO WHAT?
DRINK IT.
IT'LL WARM YOU UP.

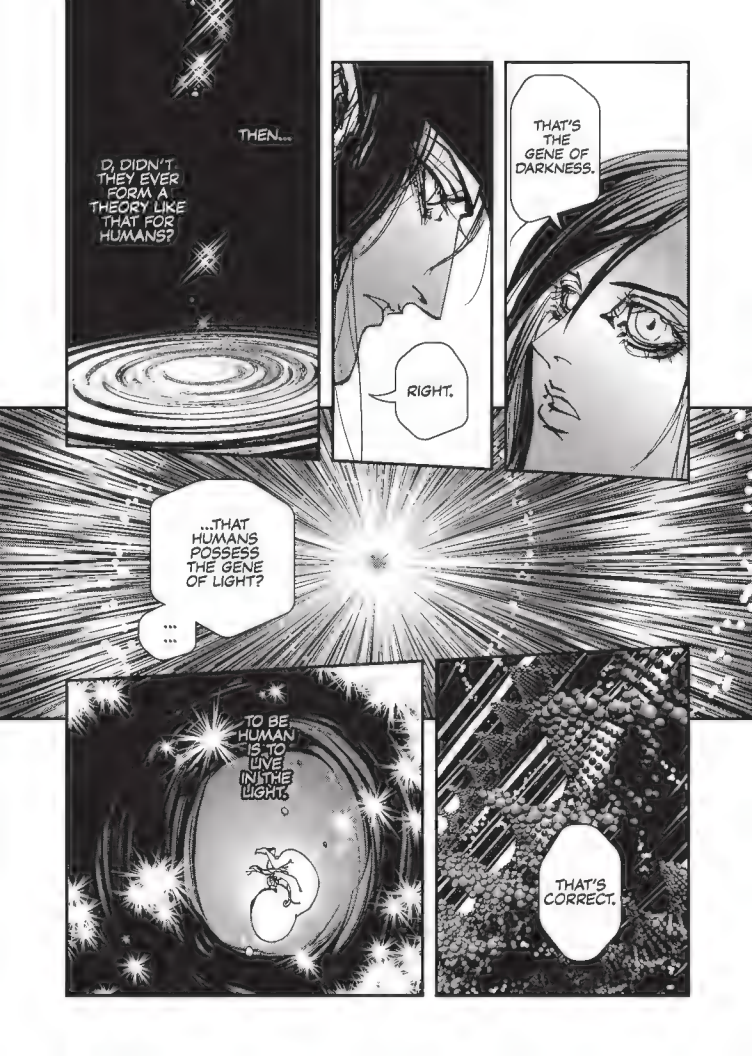
TOMORROW YOU GO BACK.
WOW, NICE MOON.
HMMM
WOULDN'T BEING A HUNTER'S WIFE BE A TOTAL THRILL?
IF SOMEONE TELLS THE EXAMINERS, YOUR TRIP TO THE CAPITAL MAY GO UP IN SMOKE.
THEN I'D JUST GO WITH YOU.
BIG DEAL.
NOPE.
YOU'RE AWARE OF MY LINEAGE.
SIMPLY TAKING ME ALONG WOULD BE FINE.
IT WAS A JOKE.
...
...
...

I'LL HAVE YOUR LUNCH WAITING FOR YOU.
ENOUGH ALREADY. I'M HEADING OUT EARLY IN THE MORN-ING.
YOU KNOCK 'EM DEAD OUT THERE.
DAR-LIN'-DEAR.
HEY, D.
WHERE'D YOU COME FROM?
WHERE'RE WE FROM AND WHERE'RE WE GOING?
THE NO-BILITY ....
...AND MAN-KIND.


TO BE OF THE NOBILITY PROBABLY MEANS TO LIVE IN THE NIGHT.
A TOUGH QUESTION.
TELL ME. I WANT TO KNOW.
WHY DO YOU ASK SUCH A THING?
YOU DON'T KNOW? YOU FREQUENT TWO WORLDS, AND YOU STILL DON'T KNOW?

...HELD BY THE DARKNESS OF NIGHT, OR THE EFFECT IT HAD ON THEM---DOWN TO THE MOLECULAR LEVEL.
TODAY---NO, EVEN DURING THE AGE WHEN NOBILITY SCIENCE REACHED ITS PEAK, IT STILL COULDN'T EVEN GRASP A CLUE OF THEIR LATENT POWER...
ACTUALLY, IT'S NOTHING OTHER THAN IRONY THAT THEY THEMSELVES AGONIZED MORE THAN ANY OTHERS IN THEIR EXPLORATION ...
...OF THE MYSTERIES OF THEIR ABILITIES.
WHERE DID WE COME FROM, WHERE ARE WE GOING...
MAYBE THAT REALLY IS THE ETERNAL QUESTION.
DOES IT HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE POWER OF DARKNESS YOU MENTIONED?
スッ
ﾊﾞｻｯ

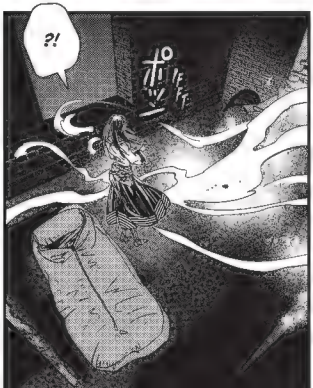
SIP
STARE
AH!
GOOD.
YEAH.
IS IT GOOD?
IT'S COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT THE ORGANIC SYSTEMS OF THE NOBILITY ARE DARKNESS BASED - EVEN DOWN TO THE GENETIC LEVEL.
THIS GAVE RISE TO A THEORY.
ARE NOT THE NOBILITY INFUSED,
WITH SOME MYSTERIOUS GENETIC INFORMATION WHICH WILL DEFINE DARKNESS ITSELF?

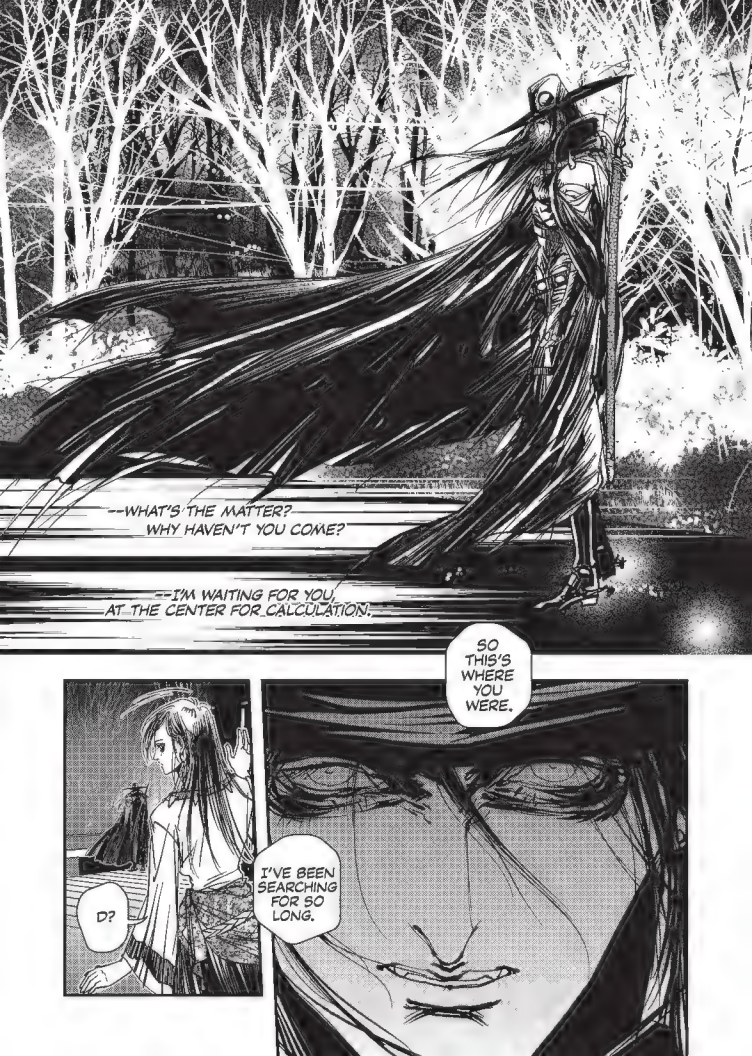

D, DIDN'T THEY EVER FORM A THEORY LIKE THAT FOR HUMANS?
THEN...
THAT'S THE GENE OF DARKNESS.
RIGHT.
...THAT HUMANS POSSESS THE GENE OF LIGHT?
...
...
TO BE HUMAN IS TO LIVE IN THE LIGHT.
THAT'S CORRECT.

LIGHT SURPASSES DARK.
WHEN YOU CONSIDER EVERYTHING BUT SAINTS
HUMANS ARE VERY FEW IN NUMBER AND FAR DIM FROM THE NOBILITY.
BUT IN THEIR SOULS EXISTS POTENTIAL FAR GREATER THAN THE WHOLE RACE!
BUT THE NOBILITY THIS TIME...

...
...
THAT CANNOT BE.
NOBILITY WHO WALK BENEATH THE SUN...
WHY'M I CRYING?
WHA-
ポロポロ
UH?
ポロポロ
HUH?

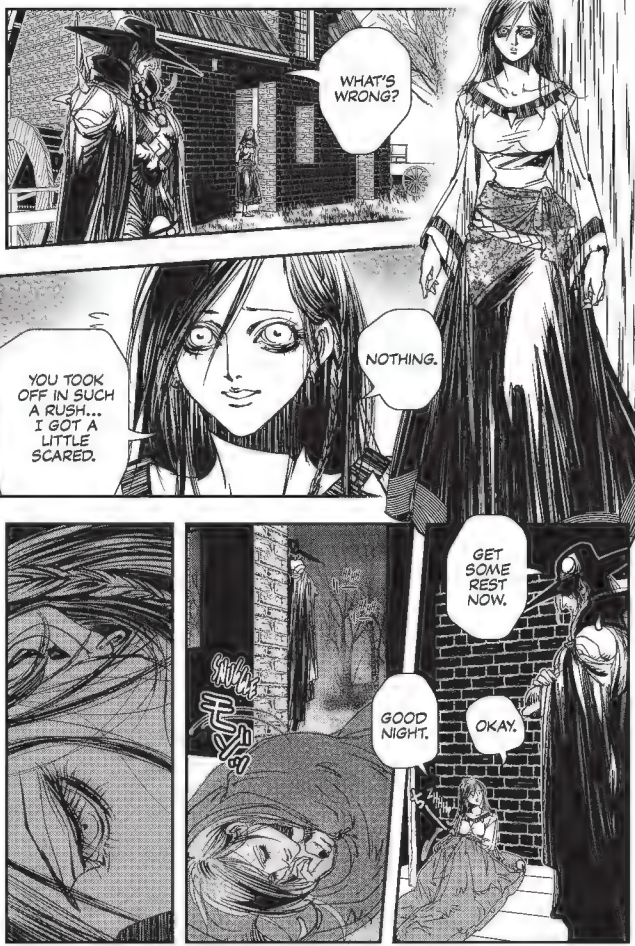
AH!

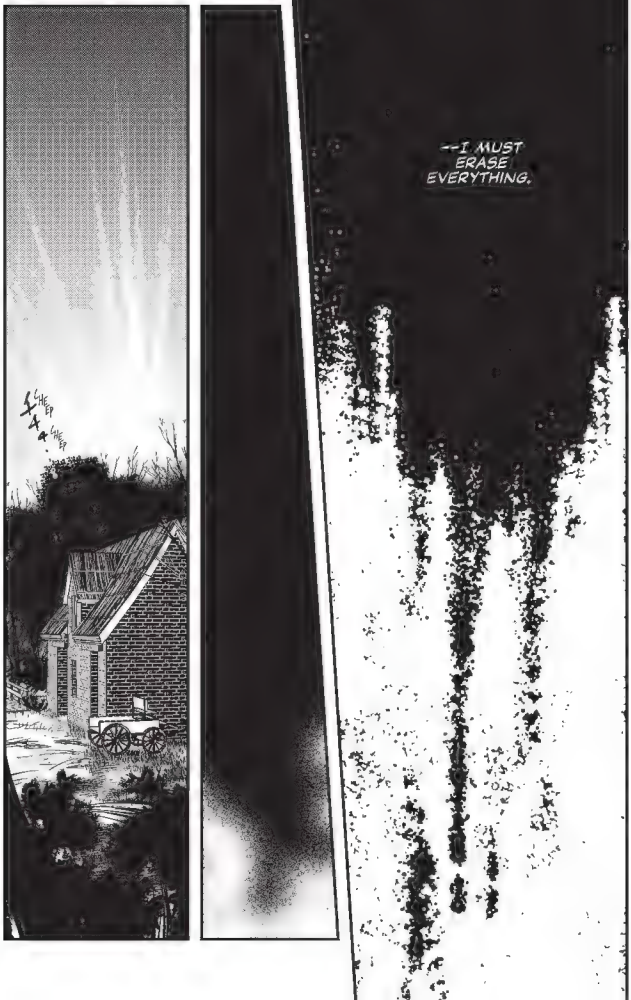

?!


--WHAT'S THE MATTER?
WHY HAVEN'T YOU COME?
--I'M WAITING FOR YOU,
AT THE CENTER FOR CALCULATION.
SO THIS'S WHERE YOU WERE.
I'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR SO LONG.
D?

--THEY MAY HAVE BEEN FAILURES.
--IF SO, I MUST ERASE EVERYTHING.
--THERE ISN'T MUCH TIME. I'LL BE WAITING.
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "WAIT"?
.....
--COME QUICKLY.
--I MUST GO.

--IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME.
BUT FROM HERE ON,
IT WILL BE EVEN LONGER.
--LONGER...
HAHH
HAHH
HAHH

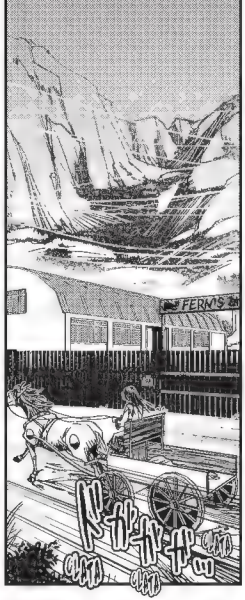

WHAT'S WRONG?
NOTHING.
YOU TOOK OFF IN SUCH A RUSH... I GOT A LITTLE SCARED.
GET SOME REST NOW.
OKAY.
GOOD NIGHT.
SWISH
モソ…?

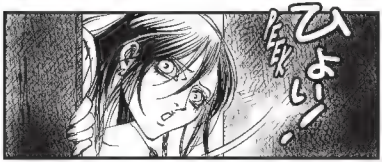

CHEEP
CHEEP
--I MUST ERASE EVERYTHING.

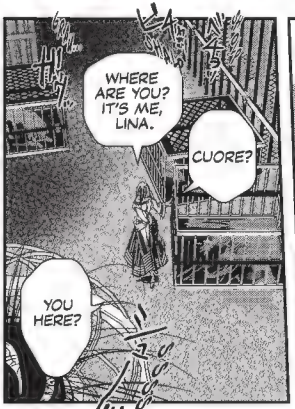
HR HR RRR
WAS HE SAYING SOMETHING ABOUT LOOKING FOR AN ENTRANCE ?
BACK TO THE RUINS, MAYBE?
D?

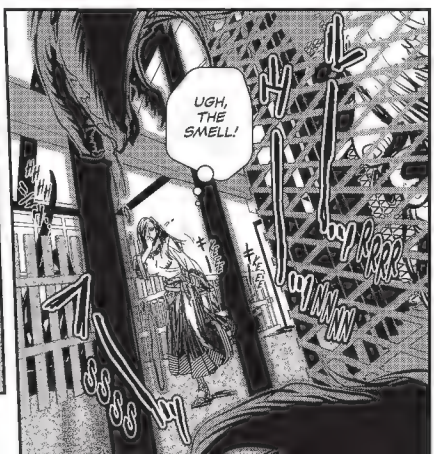
...D?
CLATA
CLATA
NAH, NO WAY...

I WONDER IF CUORE'S OKAY.


FERN'S


ひょい!


WHERE ARE YOU? IT'S ME, LINA.
CUORE?
YOU HERE?


UGH, THE SMELL!

YOU NEED SOME-THING?
!
OH WOW, DON'T SCARE ME LIKE THAT!
BESS!
SHIFT
WHAT'S THE STORY WITH THIS?
DID SOME-BODY DIE?!
EEK!
ZNNK

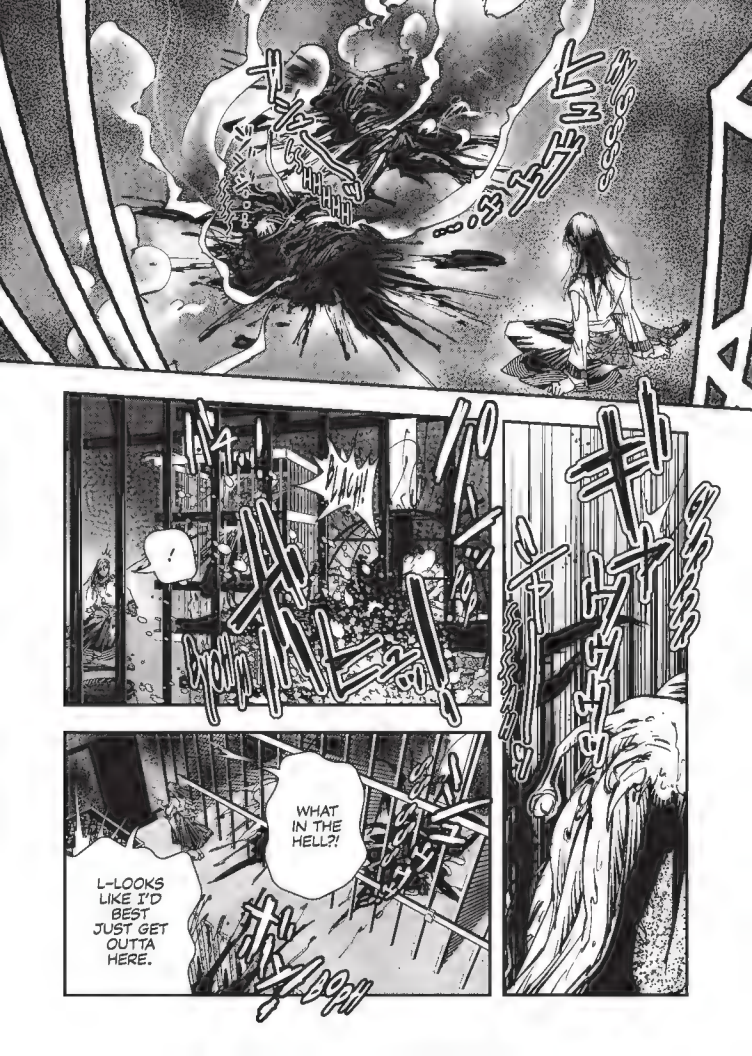
DUNN
YOU JUST RELAX, LINA.
Y--
YOU LIKE TO SLEEP IN ODD PLACES.
I WAS GONNA GO FIND YOU, BUT NOW HERE YOU ARE.
EVERY-ONE'S GONNA BE HAPPY.
WHO'S EVERY-ONE?
I CAME TO SEE CUORE.
WHERE IS HE?

HE'S WITH THE OTHERS.
LEER
!
I'VE BEEN SO LONE-SOME, LINA.
I MEAN, LOOK.
AND VERY, VERY HUNGRY.
AND THEN...
GRAB
HE WON'T LET ME HAVE EVEN A DROP OF HIS.
PAPA DRINKS NOTHING BUT MY BLOOD.
WHAT... WHAT THE HELL ...?!

IT MIGHT MAKE THE OTHERS ANGRY...
BUT ONE OR TWO SIPS SHOULD BE OKAY.
PAPA ?
SO CAN I HAVE SOME?
STOP IT!
WELL...
BESIDES, EVEN IF WE LEAVE HER BE, EVENTUALLY...
EVENTUALLY WHAT?!

WHAP
STOP IT!
EEK!
WHMP
I DIDN'T WANNA RESORT TO VIOLENCE, BUT...
WELL WELL... THAT'S NO SURPRISE.
SHEFT
SHEFT

SHRRAP
?!
THMP
BLOOGH
BLAGH


WHAT IN THE HELL?!
L-LOOKS LIKE I'D BEST JUST GET OUTTA HERE.

CUORE!
!
CUORE... WHAT ON EARTH HAPPENED?
YOU LOOK SO HAGGARD...
WELL- WELL, NOW.
HERE'S A RARE GUEST FOR YA.
CLOP

THE GUARD BEASTS'VE BEEN WIPED OUT...!
I JUST CAME HERE TO SEE CUORE.
HE'S NOT LOOKING TOO GOOD SO I'M TAKING HIM TO A DOCTOR.
I DON'T KNOW.
WHAT'RE YOU UP TO? WHERE'S FERN, OUR BOSS?
HOLY SHIT!
IF YOU'VE GOT NO BUSINESS WITH ME, LET ME THROUGH.
GRIN
LOOKS LIKE WE'VE GOT BUSINESS WITH YOU NOW.

BUT IF YOU FIND ONE, WHAT'LL YOU DO?
THE FATE OF THOSE CHILDREN WAS DECIDED TEN YEARS AGO.
OR MAYBE...
TAK
DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THERE'S...
...ANOTHER ENTRANCE.
IS IT SO YOU CAN SEE HIM?
ZHA
OR MAYBE WHAT?
IT MIGHT BE.
HAH.
HAAAAAA
ZHAAAAA

--GENES OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS.
--SPLENDID. YOU SAW THROUGH IT.
--YOU, IF ANYONE, SHOULD REMEMBER. FROM THE MOMENT YOU WERE BORN INTO THIS WORLD.
--YOU WERE THE ONE AND ONLY SUCCESS.
THEN AS I SUSPECTED, YOU WERE REPEATING THE SAME THING HERE TOO.
WHAT DID YOU DO HERE? WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME OF THOSE EXPERIMENTS TEN YEARS AGO?
--YOU DON'T REMEMBER, THEN.
BADUMP

WHAT DID YOU DO HERE? WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME OF THOSE EXPERIMENTS TEN YEARS AGO?
--YOU DON'T REMEMBER, THEN.
BADUMP

--GENES OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS.
WILLEEERN
---SPLENDID. YOU SAW-THROUGH IT.
HOSHEHEHEHON
--YOU, IF ANYONE, SHOULD REMEMBER. FROM THE MOMENT YOU WERE BORN INTO THIS WORLD.
--YOU WERE THE ONE AND ONLY SUCCESS.
THEN AS I SUSPECTED, YOU WERE REPEATING THE SAME THING HERE TOO.

オオオ
オオオ…
OHHHHN
オオオ
OHHHHN

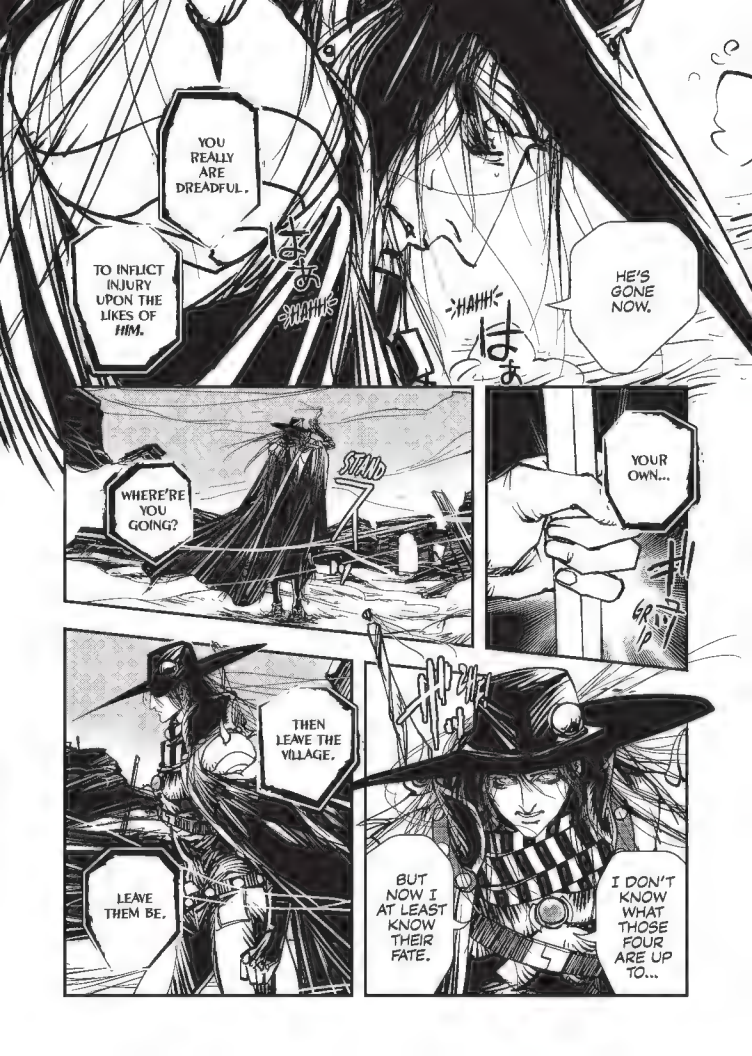
オオオ…
OHHHHN

ゴオオ
ズズズズズ

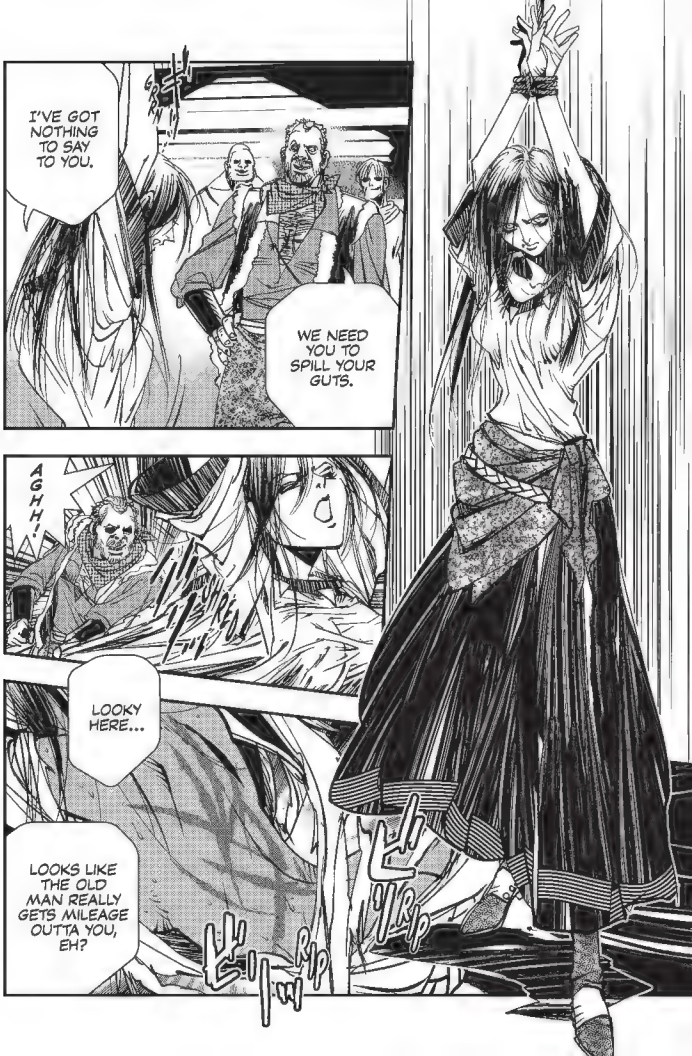
SHHHHOM
TRIGGER

KWAAS

SHHHHHOM
TH
TRIGGER


YOU REALLY ARE DREADFUL.
TO INFLICT INJURY UPON THE LIKES OF HIM.
HE'S GONE NOW.
YOUR OWN...
WHERE'RE YOU GOING?
STAND
THEN LEAVE THE VILLAGE.
LEAVE THEM BE.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THOSE FOUR ARE UP TO...
BUT NOW I AT LEAST KNOW THEIR FATE.

A TEN YEAR-LONG WINTER.
TOMOR-ROW, ONE FINDS OUT IF SHE'S GOING TO THE CAPITAL.
FOR THAT REASON ALONE, SHE BRAVED THE LONG WINTER.
MY OH MY.
YOU MEAN YOU'RE GOING TO KEEP THE TRUTH FROM HER 'TIL THE END?
SUCH A SENTIMENTAL GUY YOU ARE.
COME ON, CALL THE SHERIFF!
SQUEEZE
KRRRN


I'VE GOT NOTHING TO SAY TO YOU.
WE NEED YOU TO SPILL YOUR GUTS.
AGHH!
LOOKY HERE...
LOOKS LIKE THE OLD MAN REALLY GETS MILEAGE OUTTA YOU, EH?

THEN, YOUR CONNECTION TO THE NOBLE THAT'S BEEN RAMPAGIN' THROUGH THE VILLAGE LATELY--
NOW THEN... FIRST, FERN'S WHEREABOUTS.
QUIT IT!
DON'T TOUCH ME!
KH!
WHAP
WE'LL JUST ASK YOUR BODY ABOUT IT!

BASTARDS--
THESE--- DAMN THUGS!
WHA,
WHAT THE--?

D-DIDN'T YOU GO MISSIN'?
MR. MEYER!
THAT'S JUST ABOUT ENOUGH.
I WENT ON A LONG TRIP, CORMA.
WHERE IS MR. FERN?
AND I JUST GOT BACK A MOMENT AGO.
HE AIN'T HERE.
HE'S GONE MISSIN' INSTEAD OF YOU.
SO WE WERE QUESTIONIN' HER.
THAT GIRL SHOULD KNOW WHERE HE WENT.

YOU DON'T SAY.
BUT FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS, IT WENT POORLY.
FROM HERE ON, PLEASE LEAVE HER TO ME.
IS THAT ACCEPT-ABLE?
S-SURE.
PARDON US.

SOMETHING SAD MUST HAVE HAPPENED WHILE HE WAS AWAY...

BDA-DUMP
BDA-DUMP
BDA-DUMP
WHERE IS SHE?
THE GIRL SHOULD'VE BEEN HERE.

WAGON TRACKS LEAD BACK HERE.
HOW SHOULD I KNOW?
WHEN WE GOT DONE, SHE GREW WINGS AND FLEW AWAY.
AND SHE STARTED SCREAMIN' HER HEAD OFF.
WE WERE JUST SHOWIN' HER A GOOD TIME,
YOU WANNA HEAR WHAT WE DID?
HEH!
ANSWER ME.
WHAT DID YOU DO TO HER?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "GOOD TIME"?

...AND WE ALL CLEANED HER WOUNDS.
THEN WE LASHED HER WITH A WHIP...
--WITH OUR TONGUES!
WE SPREAD HER LEGS AND RAMMED IT IN.
SHE BAWLED AND BAWLED FOR JOY.
REALLY.
GRAB
THUD
THUD
THUD

?!
GUNK
UH?!

!!
!!
HUH?!
WHERE'S THE GIRL?
M-MEYER CAME BY... TOOK HER WITH HIM.
NOD
AND CUORE, TOO...

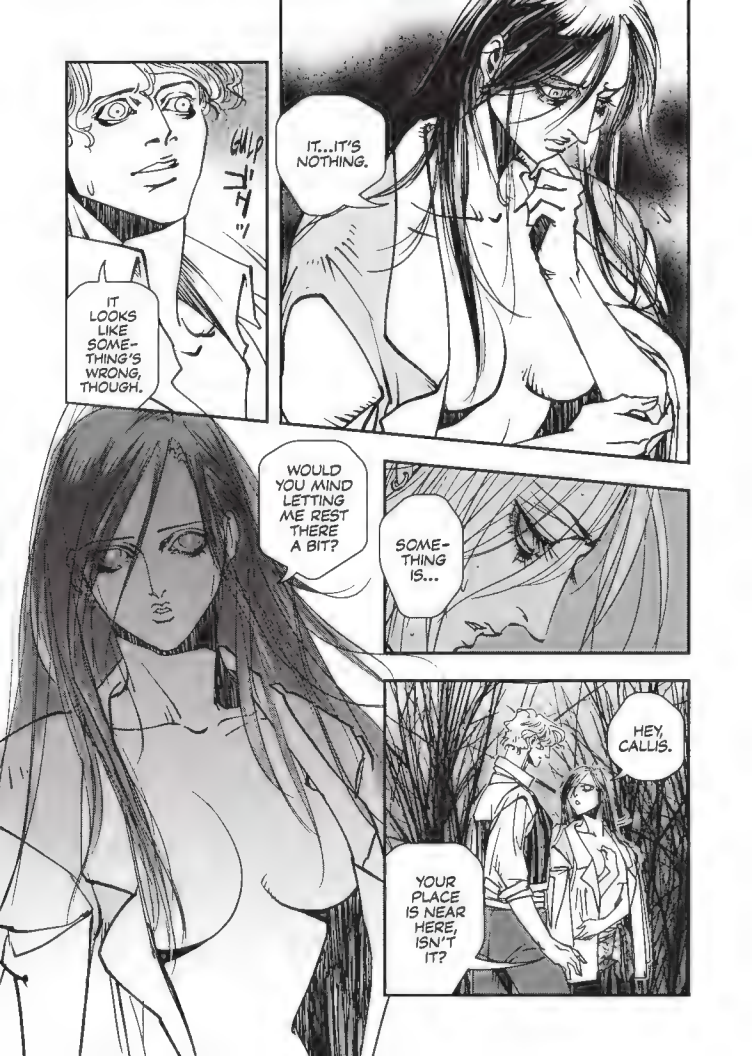
WHOA!
!
IT'S NO USE, THE HORSE WON'T BUDGE.
MR. MEYER, WE'VE GOT TO GO!
WE HAVE A STAKE GUN!
THRUST
CHK

CHLINK
GRAB
ENOUGH OF YOUR NON-SENSE!
IDIOT!
YOU STILL DON'T UNDER-STAND?
YOU AREN'T THE LINA YOU USED TO BE.

--WHAT'S WRONG?
--DON'T YOU WANT THAT MAN?
D?!
--THAT'S WHAT YOUR MIND DESIRES.
--THERE'S NO WAY IT'D REFUSE YOU.
SHFF
--LOVE IT IN WHATEVER WAY YOU SEE FIT.

NO!

AH!
LINA?
CALLIS?
WHAT'S GOT INTO YOU?
YOU'RE JUST STANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD.
A-AH...
ARE YOU ALRIGHT?


HEY, CALLIS.
YOUR PLACE IS NEAR HERE, ISN'T IT?
SOME-THING IS...
WOULD YOU MIND LETTING ME REST THERE A BIT?
IT...IT'S NOTHING.
GULP
ゴクッ
IT LOOKS LIKE SOME-THING'S WRONG, THOUGH.

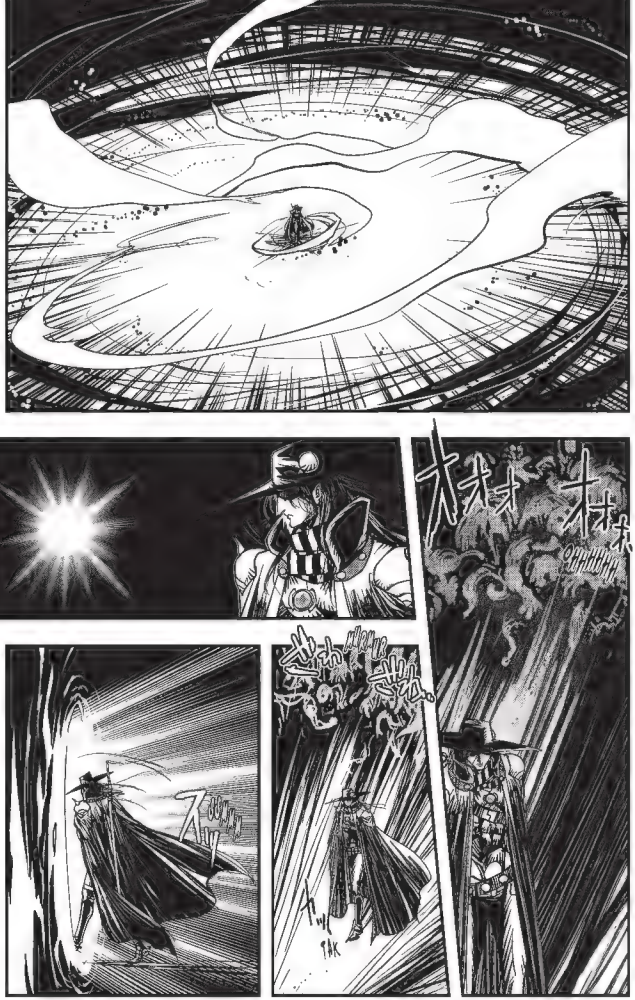
ROHHHHNN
YOU GOT HERE JUST IN TIME.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I WOULD STOP IF I WERE YOU.
WE'RE GONNA GET RID OF THOSE RUINS.
...SO THEY DON'T ENCHANT ANYONE ELSE AND RUIN LIVES ANYMORE.
WE HEARD THAT ANYONE CAN CLIMB UP LIKE NORMAL NOW.
NOW THAT THE WAY UP THE HILL IS NORMAL, IT'S ONLY FITTING TO ASSUME SOME OTHER DEFENSE IS IN PLACE.
AHH, WE'VE GOT THIS COVERED.

WE'VE GOT A SECRET WEAPON-- THAT COMPUTERIZED TANK.
WE CALLED A TECHNICIAN OUT HERE FROM THE CAPITAL TO TUNE IT UP JUST FOR SUCH AN OCCASION!

SHRAP-NEL?!
FALL BACK! WITH-DRAW! TO THE BOTTOM!
AIIEE!
AGHH!
RUN FOR IT!
AGHHHH!
RUMMBLE

GUWAAA
ズズズズ
SHAAAA
SILENCE
SO IT WAS SWAL-LOWED BY THE HILL.
CLOP
CLOP

ヒュイ
FUCK
TMP



オオオオ
OOOOOOJH
オオォ
---D.
---D.
---D.
AT LAST WE MEET.

オオ
オオオ
OOOOOOSH
---D.
---D.
AT LAST WE MEET.

---D.

--JUST..TO ASK YOU ONE THING.
---I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.
---I WANT TO KNOW THE NAME OF YOUR FATHER.
D, YOUR FATHER'S NAME---?

WHAT IS IT--?
GRIND
WHAT'S YOUR FATHER'S NAME--?
...HIS NAME IS..... D...RA...

AHHH!
KNSH

AHA... CUORE.
HOW DID YOU...? THE ENTRANCE'S—
I FIGURED HE WAS HALF DEAD FROM USING TOO MUCH PSYCHIC ENERGY...
BUT NO MATTER—
MY DESIRE WAS FULFILLED.
WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO CUT DOWN LINA?
SHIFT
...THE BIRTH OF NEW NOBILITY.

IF I KILL HER, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?
CAN YOU? KILL YOUR FRIEND?
CLANG!

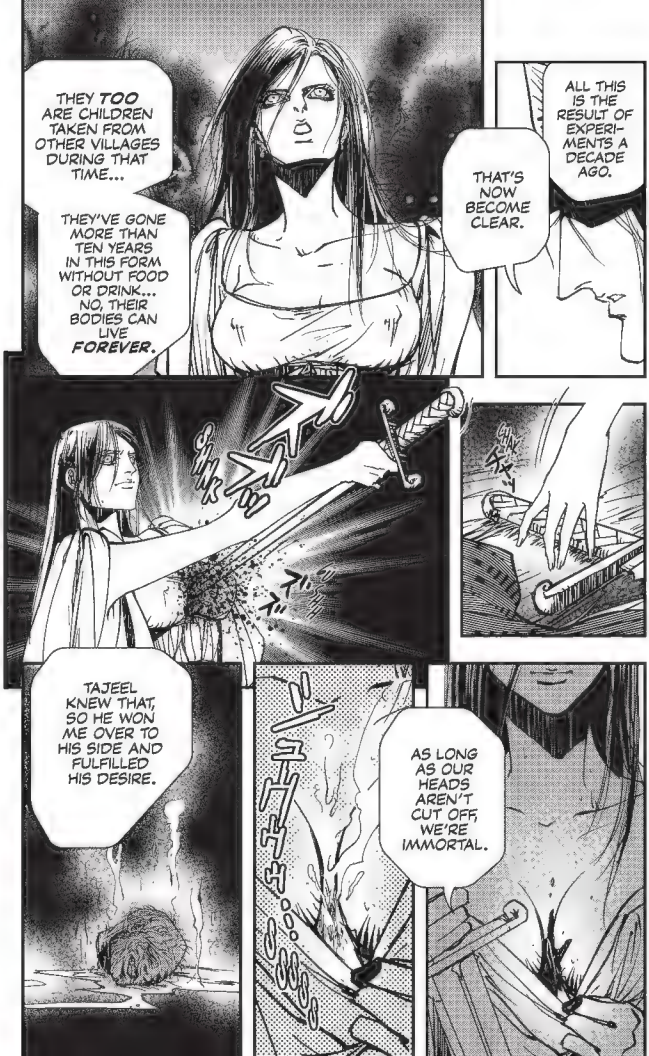
ドドド

ドン
ドン
ドン

ヒュ!
HYNN
SPRING
SHOCK

CLUNK
CLUNK
WHMP
コロ
ROLL
BLOOD
PUSSSSS

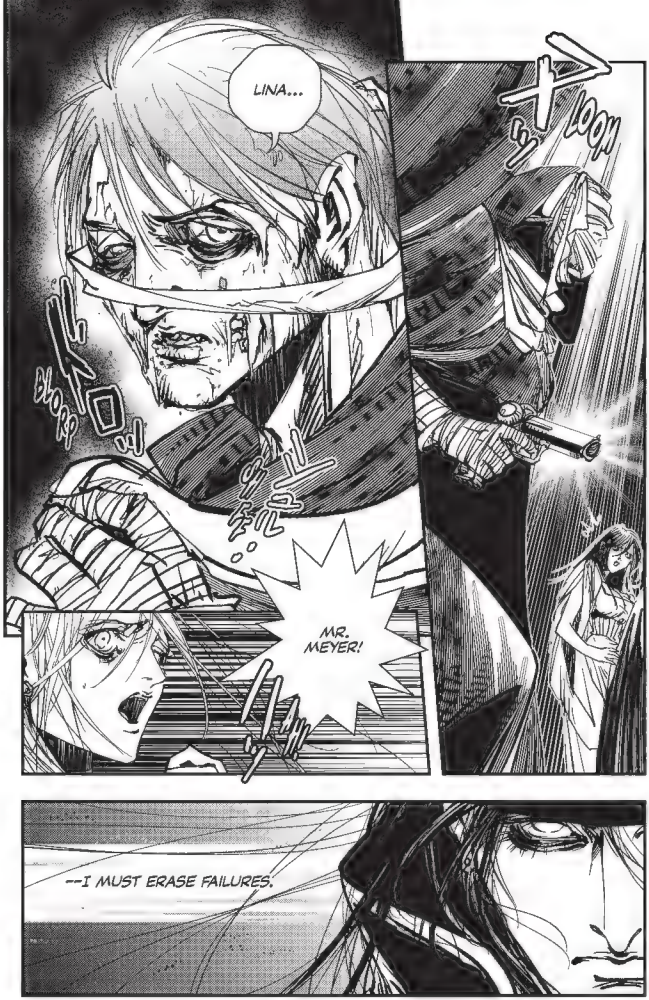
GAINING THE ABILITY TO AMPLIFY AND CONTROL HIS PSYCHIC POWER CAUSED CUORE'S INTELLIGENCE TO DETERIORATE IN EXCHANGE...
SUUU...
SUCH IS THE PRICE FOR BEING GRANTED POWER NO NOBLE HAS EVER KNOWN.
THIS, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS TAJEEL SCHMIKA.
FROM THE TIME THE EXPERIMENTS WERE COMPLETED, HE WAS BRUTAL AND RECKLESSLY THIRSTY FOR BLOOD, SO HE ALONE WAS LEFT HERE.
YOU KNOW NEARLY ALL OF IT ALREADY, DON'T YOU?
WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH?
YOU'LL SEE HIM SOON.
IS MR. MEYER ALRIGHT?


THEY TOO ARE CHILDREN TAKEN FROM OTHER VILLAGES DURING THAT TIME...
THEY'VE GONE MORE THAN TEN YEARS IN THIS FORM WITHOUT FOOD OR DRINK... NO, THEIR BODIES CAN LIVE FOREVER.
ALL THIS IS THE RESULT OF EXPERI-MENTS A DECADE AGO.
THAT'S NOW BECOME CLEAR.
SHAK
TAJEEL KNEW THAT, SO HE WON ME OVER TO HIS SIDE AND FULFILLED HIS DESIRE.
AS LONG AS OUR HEADS AREN'T CUT OFF, WE'RE IMMORTAL.

BECAUSE UNTIL OUR GENES OF DARKNESS WERE COMPLETE,
HE ALONE BEING AWAKE AMOUNTED TO NOTHING.
WHY DIDN'T HE TRY FOR YOU UNTIL NOW?
TAP
I WONDER WHAT KIND OF CHILD WE'LL HAVE.
WE ALL AWAKENED SEPA-RATELY.
BUT IT SEEMS IN THE END, THE EXPERIMENTS WERE A FAILURE...

IT WAS HIS OWN FAULT.
ONCE WE WERE ALONE, HE SUBJUGATED ME AND TRIED TO GET ME TO YIELD TO GO TO THE CAPITAL.
THAT WAS WHY HE PRETENDED TO BE INTERESTED IN A GIRL LIKE ME WHO'D BEEN TAINTED BY THE NOBILITY.
AND YOU'RE THE SAME?
YES.
HE PROTECTED ME UNTIL THE END.
EVEN THOUGH HE KNEW HIS FATE.

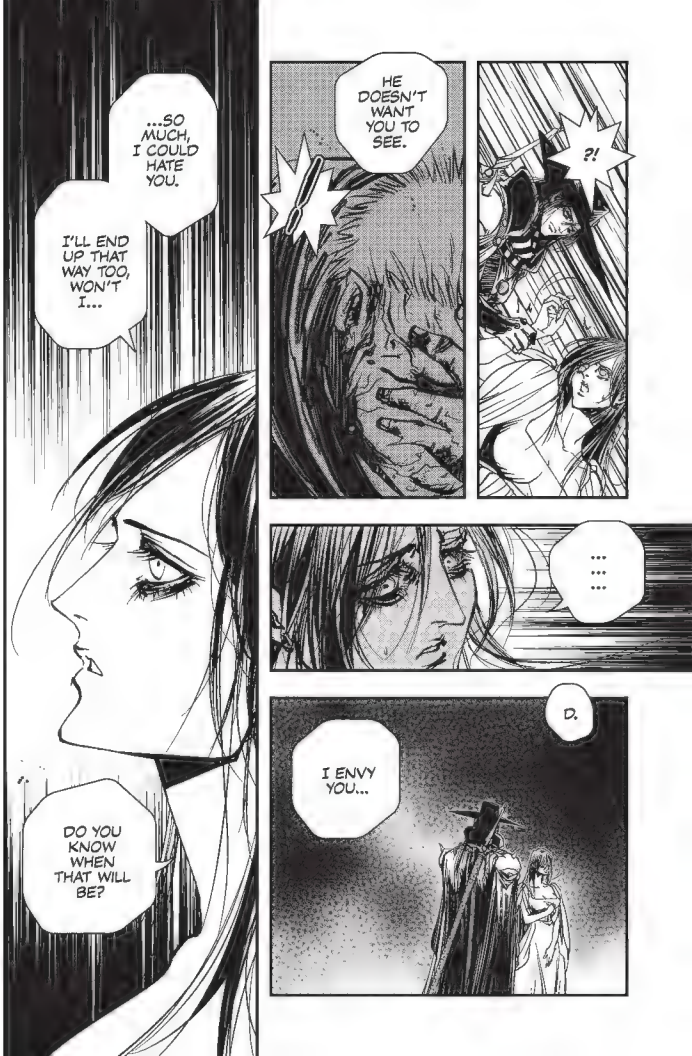
HE STILL HADN'T MASTERED CONTROLLING HIS PSYCHIC POWER...
AND HE INSTEAD RELEASED IT WHERE WE ALL WERE.
THE NIGHT KAISER'S WIFE WAS ATTACKED A SECOND TIME, HE FOLLOWED TAJEEL SECRETLY, WITH THE INTENTION OF STOPPING HIM.
IT'S JUST...
HE FOUND THE ENTRANCE IN THE FOREST ...
AND WOUND UP SETTING TAJEEL FREE...
I INTEND TO LET HIM HAVE ME TOO.
WILL YOU TRY TO KILL US? YOU'RE A HUNTER, AREN'T YOU?
WHAT NOW, D?
WHY... ARE YOU LETTING HIM GO-- LINA?
I DON'T WORK WITHOUT COMPENSATION.
BESIDES, MY JOB'S ALREADY FINISHED.
I SEE.


LINA...
BLOOD
BLOOD
MR. MEYER!
--I MUST ERASE FAILURES.

WERE YOU AWARE OF THIS?
YOU DON'T LOOK SURPRISED.
AREN'T WE... PEOPLE WHO WERE MADE THE SAME WAY?
THAT'S WHY WHEN I ANALYZED THE COMBINED BLOOD SAMPLES-- A TOTALLY DIFFERENT FACE WAS INFERRED.
IT SEEMS YOUR VAMPIRIFIC NATURE HAD AWOKEN BEFORE YOU-- YOURSELF KNEW IT.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO ATTACKED FERN AND HIS DAUGHTER.
WHY'RE WE... THE ONLY ONES WHO HAVE TO DIE...?
...WHY...
WHY'RE YOU THE ONLY ONE WHO'S ALRIGHT?

STAY BACK!
MR. MEYER!
...LINA.
YOU MUSTN'T STUDY THE...
...HISTORY OF THE...
NOBI... LITY...

—YOU WERE THE ONLY SUCCESS.
IS THIS OUR FATE?
GRIP
WAIT, WHERE'RE —
?

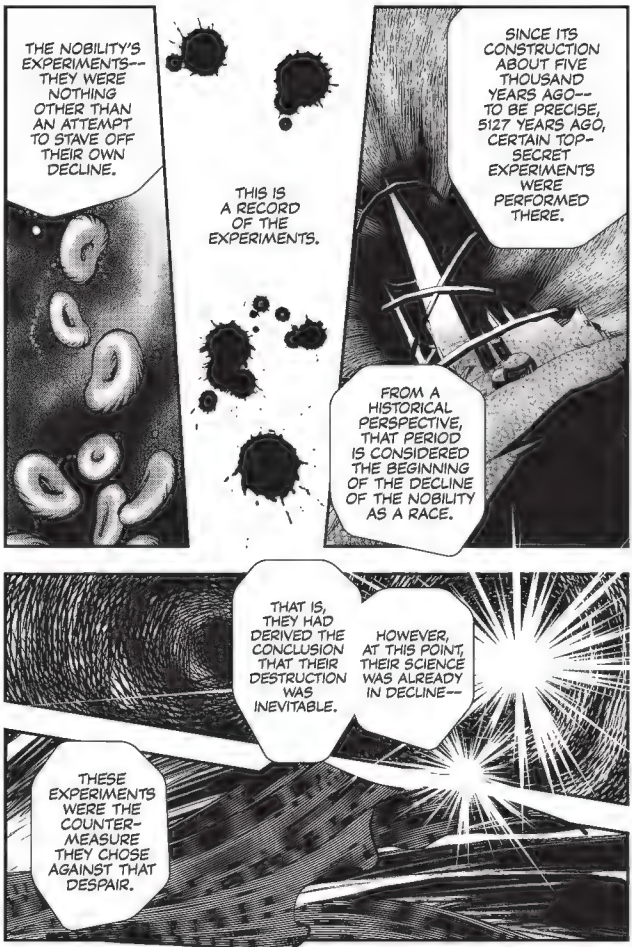

HE DOESN'T WANT YOU TO SEE.
?!
...SO MUCH, I COULD HATE YOU.
I'LL END UP THAT WAY TOO, WON'T I...
...
...
...
D.
I ENVY YOU...
DO YOU KNOW WHEN THAT WILL BE?

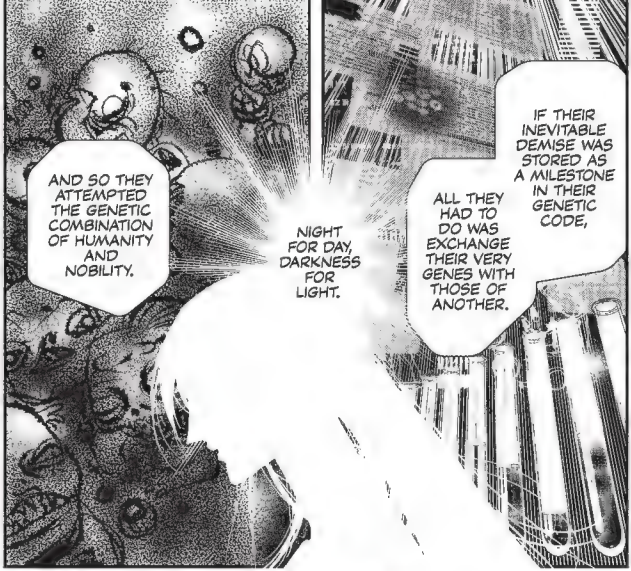
THE NEXT DAY–
THE EXAM BOARD
NO,
I DON'T.

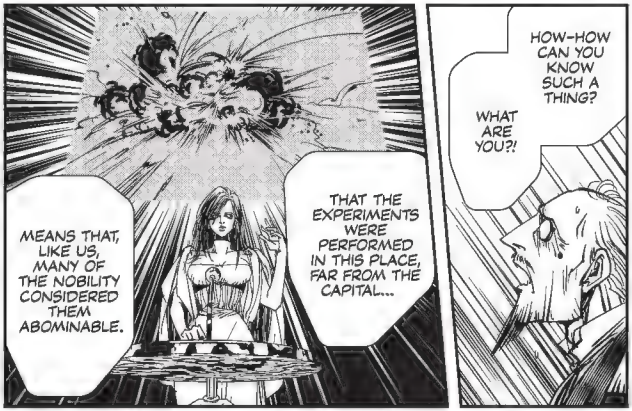
MURMUR
ざわ
MURMUR
ざわ
MURMUR
ざわ
MURMUR
ざわ
MURMUR
ざわ
AHEM.
IF I COULD HAVE EVERYONE'S ATTENTION ...

SHE SCORED 1200 POINTS.
SUPERB, MOST SUPERB.
OUT OF A POSSIBLE 1200 POINTS ON THE SELECTION TEST...
THIS YEAR'S REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE VILLAGE OF TEPES-- LINA SWEEN.
I ASK YOU JUST ONE QUESTION.
NOW, IN REGARDS TO OUR DETERMI-NATION...
EXCEL-LENT.
HER EXCELLENT WORK LED TO HER SELECTION BY THE EXAM BOARD.
WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO STUDY IN THE CAPITAL?

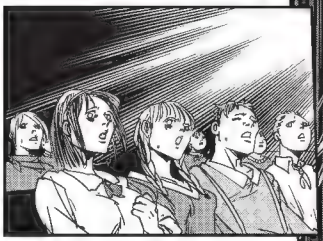
BEFORE I ANSWER, THERE IS SOMETHING I WANT TO SHOW YOU.
THIS CASTLE WAS...
...FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE NOBILITY'S CENTER FOR CALCULATION.


THE NOBILITY'S EXPERIMENTS-- THEY WERE NOTHING OTHER THAN AN ATTEMPT TO STAVE OFF THEIR OWN DECLINE.
THIS IS A RECORD OF THE EXPERIMENTS.
SINCE ITS CONSTRUCTION ABOUT FIVE THOUSAND YEARS AGO-- TO BE PRECISE, 5127 YEARS AGO, CERTAIN TOP-SECRET EXPERIMENTS WERE PERFORMED THERE.
FROM A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE, THAT PERIOD IS CONSIDERED THE BEGINNING OF THE DECLINE OF THE NOBILITY AS A RACE.
HOWEVER, AT THIS POINT, THEIR SCIENCE WAS ALREADY IN DECLINE--
THAT IS, THEY HAD DERIVED THE CONCLUSION THAT THEIR DESTRUCTION WAS INEVITABLE.
THESE EXPERIMENTS WERE THE COUNTER-MEASURE THEY CHOSE AGAINST THAT DESPAIR.

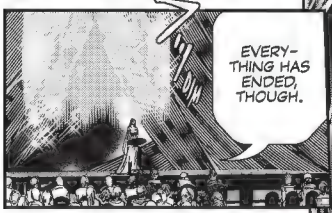

AND SO THEY ATTEMPTED THE GENETIC COMBINATION OF HUMANITY AND NOBILITY.
NIGHT FOR DAY, DARKNESS FOR LIGHT.
ALL THEY HAD TO DO WAS EXCHANGE THEIR VERY GENES WITH THOSE OF ANOTHER.
IF THEIR INEVITABLE DEMISE WAS STORED AS A MILESTONE IN THEIR GENETIC CODE,

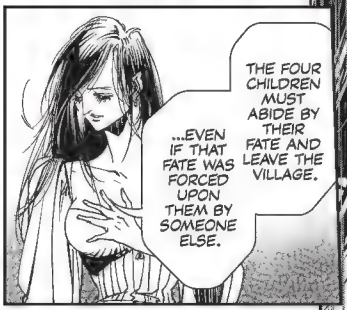

MEANS THAT, LIKE US, MANY OF THE NOBILITY CONSIDERED THEM ABOMINABLE.
THAT THE EXPERIMENTS WERE PERFORMED IN THIS PLACE, FAR FROM THE CAPITAL...
WHAT ARE YOU?!
HOW-HOW CAN YOU KNOW SUCH A THING?

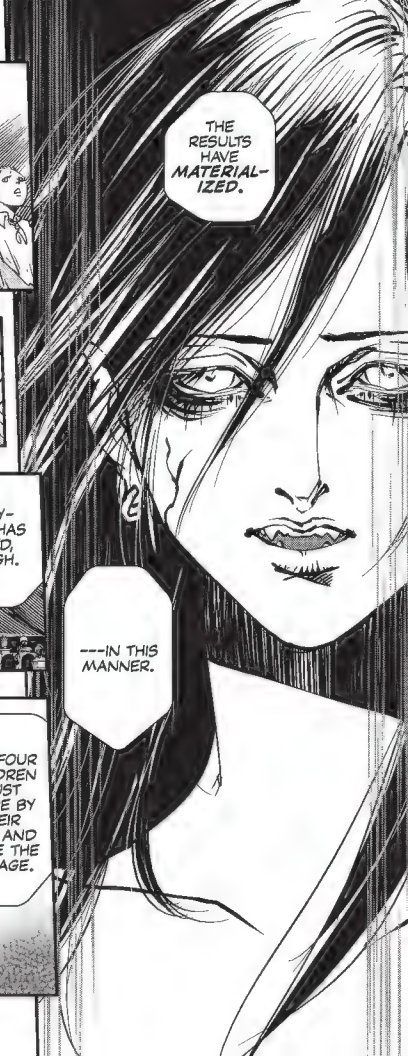
THEY TOO ABHORRED THE IDEA OF A COUPLING WITH HUMANS-- AND THIS PLACE WAS DESTROYED BY AN OPPOSING FACTION.
THOSE WHO KNEW THE SECRET WITHDREW FROM THIS LAND, AND SILENCE REIGNED FOR FIVE THOUSAND YEARS.
WITHOUT ANY KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT RESULTS...
...IT WOULD YIELD IN THEIR BODIES TEN YEARS LATER.
THEN TEN YEARS AGO-- THE SILENCE WAS BROKEN.
FOUR CHILDREN WERE TAKEN AWAY FROM OUR VILLAGE-- THEN GIVEN A CERTAIN TREATMENT AND SENT BACK AGAIN.
AND NOW...



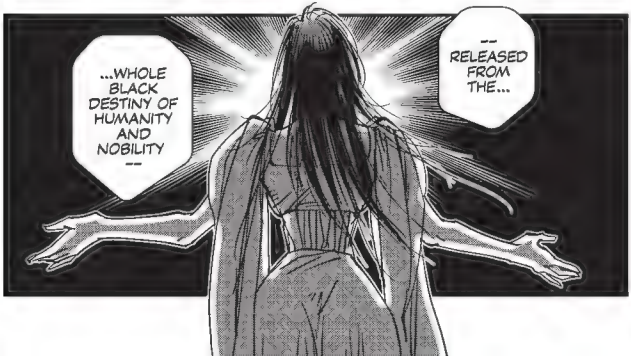
...
LINA
...


EVERY-
THING HAS
ENDED,
THOUGH.


...EVEN
IF THAT
FATE WAS
FORCED
UPON
THEM BY
SOMEONE
ELSE.
THE FOUR
CHILDREN
MUST
ABIDE BY
THEIR
FATE AND
LEAVE THE
VILLAGE.


THE
RESULTS
HAVE
MATERIAL-
IZED.
---IN THIS
MANNER.

HERE IS WHERE THE CHILDREN WERE MEANT TO GO.
THEY THEMSELVES TOOK A STEP UP THE LONG, LONG STAIRCASE THAT LEADS TO IT.
AND THAT IN THE END, THOUGH THEY WERE UNABLE TO REACH IT...
...WHAT WAS DESIRED FOR THEM-- WHAT'S WAITING THERE AHEAD OF THEM.
THEY TOO HAVE FINALLY BEGUN TO UNDER-STAND...
THERE IS NO LONGER A NEED TO MOURN FOR THEM.


...WHOLE BLACK DESTINY OF HUMANITY AND NOBILITY --
-- RELEASED FROM THE...

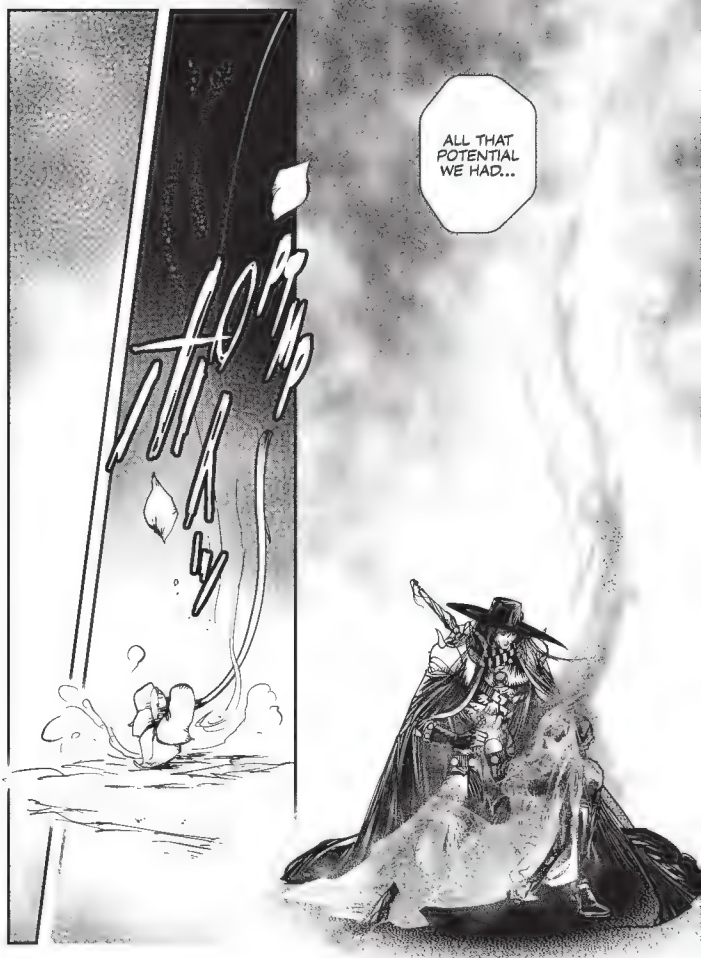
ARE THEY REALLY, TRULY CURSED?
THE ONES WHO GUIDE HUMANITY TO A HIGHER LEVEL...
THE PEOPLE WHO BROUGHT TO MIND THIS POTEN-TIAL...
THIS IS THE POTENTIAL OF THE NEW HUMANITY.
SHUDDER
--D.
JUST HIDE MY FACE...
SHOOK
DON'T LOOK AT ME.
STAY BACK!
I WISH...
...TO STUDY THE HISTORY OF THE NOBILITY.

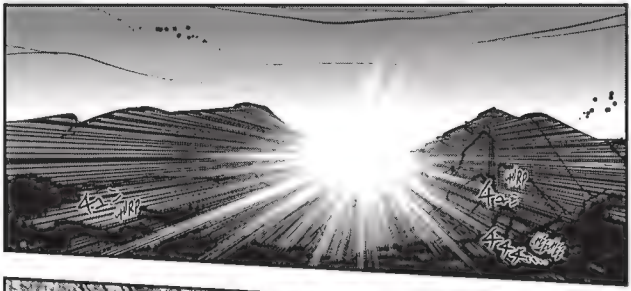
THIS IS THE POTENTIAL OF THE NEW HUMANITY.
SHIIIIIIII
I WISH...
...TO STUDY THE HISTORY OF THE NOBILITY.

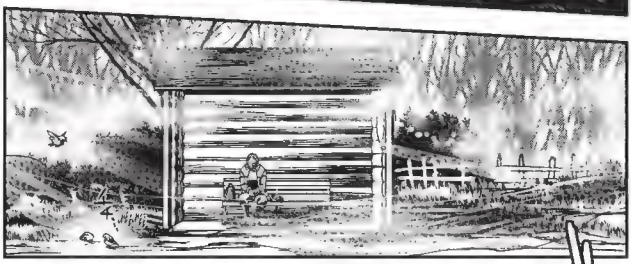
ARE THEY REALLY, TRULY CURSED?
THE ONES WHO GUIDE HUMANITY TO A HIGHER LEVEL...
THE PEOPLE WHO BROUGHT TO MIND THIS POTENTIAL...
--D.
JUST HIDE MY FACE...
DON'T LOOK AT ME.
STAY BACK!

I'LL ALWAYS BE HERE.
THANK YOU-- D.
STAY WITH ME... I'M SO SCARED.
THIS...
BACK... AT THE WATER-WHEEL MILL.
...IT WAS FROM YOU.
THAT'S RIGHT.
I WAS HAPPY.
...SO VERY... HAPPY.

DON'T SPEAK.
I WISH I COULD MEET THE OTHER ONE.
THAT THERE'D BE...TWO PEOPLE WHO CARED ABOUT ME...
SILENCE
TO HIM
GOOD-BYE...D.
FFFFFF


ALL THAT POTENTIAL WE HAD...
THUD



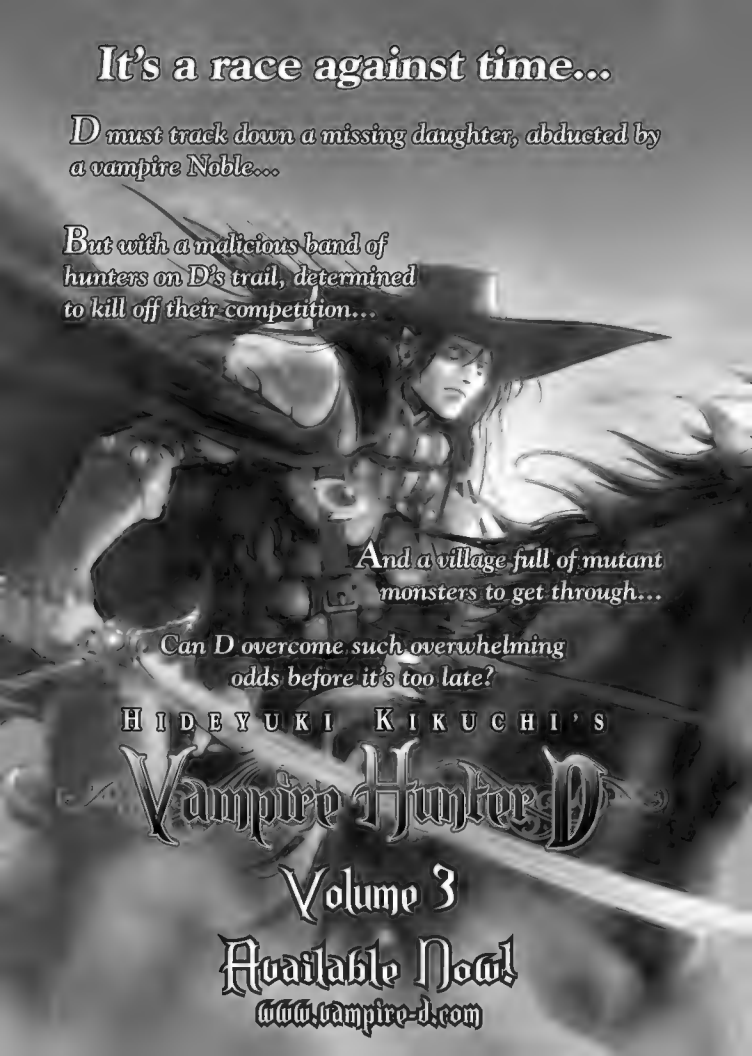


ブロロロロ
ブロロロロ
ブロロロロ

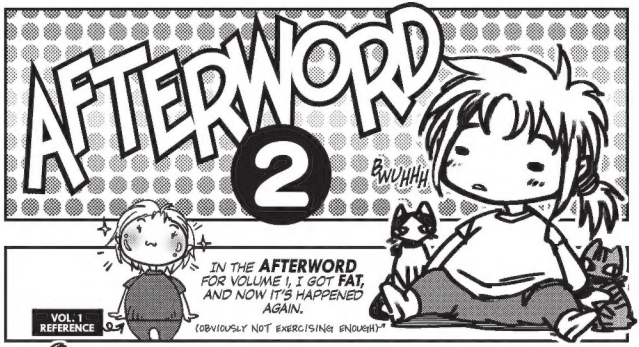
ブロロロロ……
ギシッ
ハヒーン
ブルルル
ブロロロ
ブロロロ
clop
clop
clop

I'M GOING TO THE CAPITAL!
TO STUDY THE HISTORY OF THE NOBILITY!

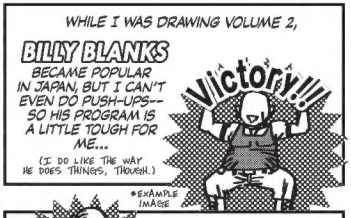
HIDEYUKI KIKUCHI'S VAMPIRE HUNTER D VOL. 2 - END


It's a race against time...
D must track down a missing daughter, abducted by a vampire Noble...
But with a malicious band of hunters on D's trail, determined to kill off their competition...
And a village full of mutant monsters to get through...
Can D overcome such overwhelming odds before it's too late?
HIDEYUKI KIKUCHI'S
Vampire Hunter D
Volume 3
Available Now!
www.vampire-d.com

AFTERWORD 2

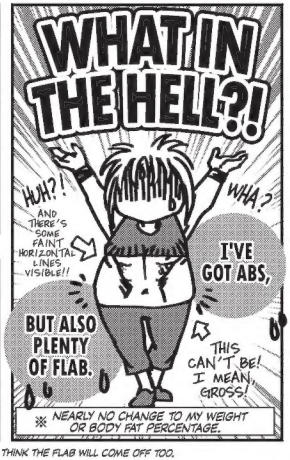

BWUHHH
IN THE AFTERWORD FOR VOLUME 1, I GOT FAT, AND NOW IT'S HAPPENED AGAIN.
(OBVIOUSLY NOT EXERCISING ENOUGH)
VOL. 1 REFERENCE

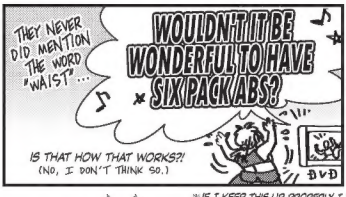
I CAN'T LET ANYONE SEE THIS...
I'LL BASED ON YOUR SMILE
I HAD BEEN DOING THIS (20-40 MINUTES) THREE TIMES A WEEK FOR THE MOST PART, FOR ABOUT THREE MONTHS...


WHILE I WAS DRAWING VOLUME 2,
BILLY BLANKS BECAME POPULAR IN JAPAN, BUT I CAN'T EVEN DO PUSH-UPS-- SO HIS PROGRAM IS A LITTLE TOUGH FOR ME...
(I DO LIKE THE WAY HE DOES THINGS, THOUGH.)
Victory!!!
*EXAMPLE IMAGE

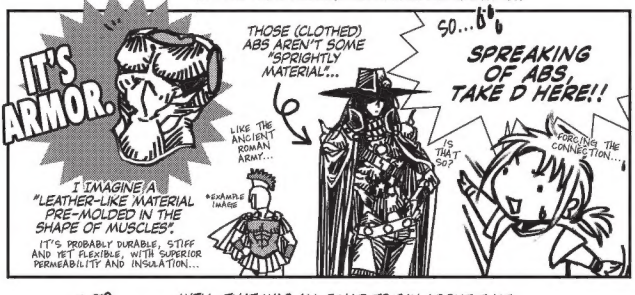
Turbo Jam
SO I PICKED UP A LITTLE SOFTER EXERCISE DVD.
(IT'S DANCE-LIKE AND FUN.)

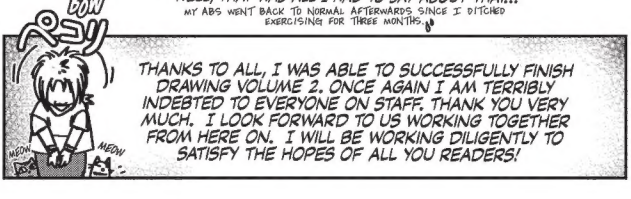
3P
PEEK
ABS!
(ABDOMINAL MUSCLES)

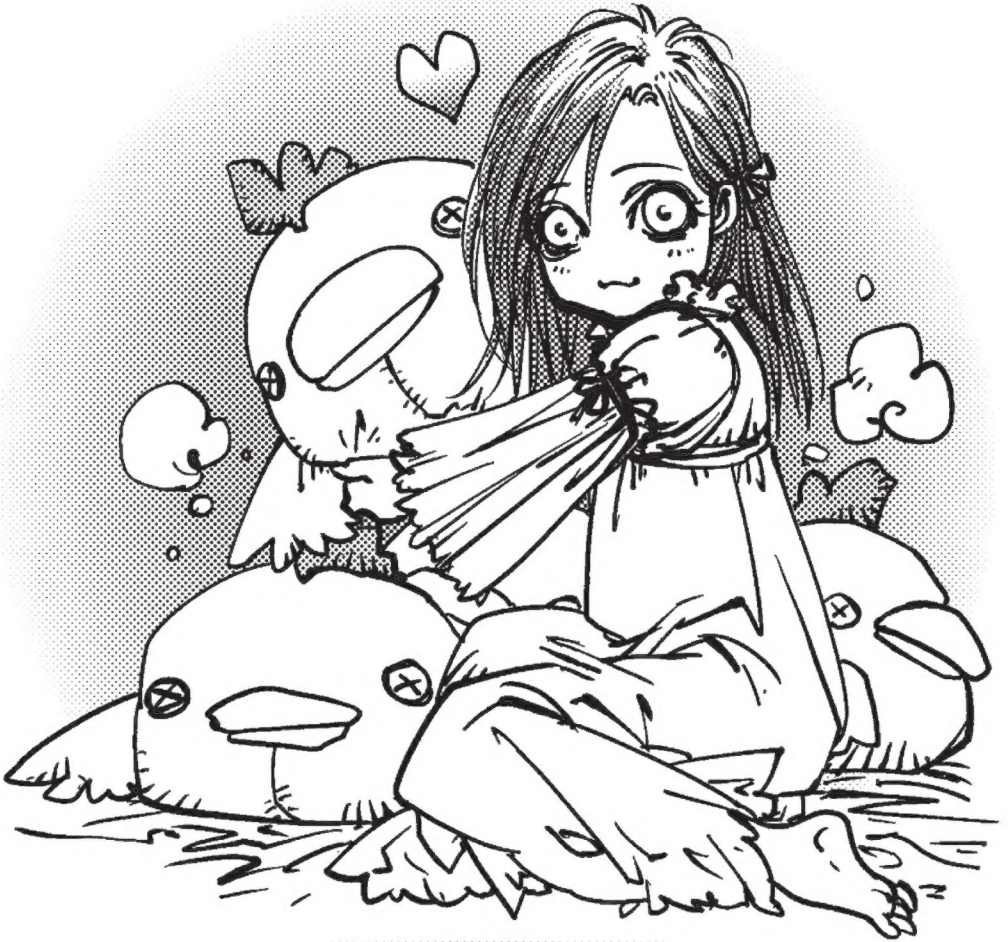

WHAT IN THE HELL?!
HUH?!
AND THERE'S SOME FAINT HORIZONTAL LINES VISIBLE!!
WHA?
I'VE GOT ABS,
BUT ALSO PLENTY OF FLAB.
THIS CAN'T BE! I MEAN, GROSS!
※ NEARLY NO CHANGE TO MY WEIGHT OR BODY FAT PERCENTAGE.


THEY NEVER DID MENTION THE WORD "WAIST"...
WOULDN'T IT BE WONDERFUL TO HAVE SIX PACK ABS?
IS THAT HOW THAT WORKS?! (NO, I DON'T THINK SO.)
DVD

※IF I KEEP THIS UP PROPERLY, I THINK THE FLAB WILL COME OFF TOO.


IT'S ARMOR.
I IMAGINE A "LEATHER-LIKE MATERIAL PRE-MOLDED IN THE SHAPE OF MUSCLES".
IT'S PROBABLY DURABLE, STIFF AND YET FLEXIBLE, WITH SUPERIOR PERMEABILITY AND INSULATION...
THOSE (CLOTHED) ABS AREN'T SOME "SPRIGHTLY MATERIAL"...
LIKE THE ANCIENT ROMAN ARMY...
※EXAMPLE IMAGE
SO...
SPREAKING OF ABS, TAKE D HERE!!
IS THAT SO?
FORCING THE CONNECTION...


BOW
ペコリ
MEOW
MEOW
WELL, THAT WAS ALL I HAD TO SAY ABOUT THAT...
MY ABS WENT BACK TO NORMAL AFTERWARDS SINCE I DITCHED EXERCISING FOR THREE MONTHS.
THANKS TO ALL, I WAS ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY FINISH DRAWING VOLUME 2. ONCE AGAIN I AM TERRIBLY INDEBTED TO EVERYONE ON STAFF. THANK YOU VERY MUCH. I LOOK FORWARD TO US WORKING TOGETHER FROM HERE ON. I WILL BE WORKING DILIGENTLY TO SATISFY THE HOPES OF ALL YOU READERS!



LIKE IT? BUY IT!

LOVAG